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CLASSES,

EDITION.





NOTES  
ON  
THE GOSPELS:

PRINCIPALLY DESIGNED FOR THE USE OF  
SUNDAY SCHOOL TEACHERS AND BIBLE CLASSES

BY  
REV. ALBERT BARNES.

CONDENSED FROM THE AMERICAN EDITION.

1835.

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## PREFACE.

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IN the preparation of the following notes, free use has been made of all the helps within the reach of the author. The object has been to endeavour to express, in as few words as possible, the real meaning of the gospels: the results of their critical study, rather than the process by which these results were reached. It was the wish of the writer to present to Sunday school teachers a plain and simple explanation of the more common difficulties of the book which it is their province to teach.

It is designed also to be a Harmony of the Gospels. Particular attention has been bestowed, especially in the notes on Matthew, to bring the different narratives of the evangelists together, and to show that, in their narration of the same events, there is no real contradiction. It will be recollected that the sacred narrative of an event is what it is reported to be by all the evangelists. It will also be recollected that the most plausible objections to the New Testament have been drawn from the apparent contradictions in the Gospels. The importance of meeting these difficulties, in the education of the young, and of showing that these objections are not well founded, will be apparent to all.

Particular attention has been paid to the references to parallel passages of scripture. In all instances, in these notes, they are an essential part of the explanation of the text. The authority of the bible has been deemed the only authority that was necessary in such cases.

The great truth is becoming more and more impressed on the minds of this generation, that the bible is the only authoritative source of religious belief; and if there are any institutions pre-eminently calculated to deepen this impression, and fix it permanently in the minds of the coming age, they are Sunday schools. Every minister of the gospel, every parent, every christian, must therefore feel the importance that just views of interpretation should be imbibed in these schools. The writer of these notes has felt more deeply than he has any other sentiment, the importance of inculcating on the young, proper modes of explaining the sacred scriptures. If he can assist in extending such views through the community, his wish in this work will be accomplished. He commits it, therefore, to the blessing of the God of the bible, praying that it may be one among many instruments of forming correct religious views, and promoting the practical love of God and man.

Philadelphia;  
August 25, 1832.

## INTRODUCTION.

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THE writings which are regarded by christians as the sole standard of faith and practice, have been designated at various periods by different names. They are frequently called the Scriptures, to denote that they are the most important of all writings; the Holy Scriptures, because composed by persons Divinely inspired, and containing sacred truth; and the Canonical Scriptures. The word canon means a rule, and it was applied by the christian fathers to the books of the Bible, because they were regarded as an authoritative rule of faith and practice by all christians; and also to distinguish them from certain spurious or apocryphal books, which, although some of them might be true as matter of history, or correct in doctrine, were not regarded as an inspired rule of faith, and were therefore considered as not canonical.

But the most common appellation given now to these writings is, the Bible. This is a Greek word signifying book. It is given to the scriptures by way of eminence, to denote that this is the Book of books, as being infinitely superior to every unassisted production of the human mind.

The most common and general division of the Bible is into the Old and New Testaments. The word testament is taken from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word meaning covenant, compact, or agreement. It is applied to the covenant or compact which God made with the Jews to be their God, and thus primarily denotes the agreement, the compact, the promises, the institutions, of the old dispensation, and then the record of that compact in the writings of Moses and the prophets. The name 'Old Testament,' or 'Old Covenant,' therefore, denotes the books containing the records of God's compact with his people, or his dispensations under the Mosaic or Jewish state. The word New Covenant, or Testament, denotes the

books which contain the record of God's new covenant or compact with his people under the Messiah, or since Christ came.

The Jews divided the Old Testament into three parts, called the Law, the Prophets, and the Hagiographia, or the holy writings. This division is noticed by our Saviour in Luke xxiv. 44,\* 'All things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.'

The books of the Bible were anciently written without any divisions into chapters and verses. The division into chapters and verses is of recent origin. It was first adopted in the 13th century by Cardinal Hugo, who wrote a celebrated commentary on the scriptures. He divided the Latin Vulgate, the version used in the church of Rome, into chapters nearly the same as those which now exist in our English translation. These chapters he divided into smaller sections by placing the letters A B C, &c., at equal distances from each other in the margin.

The verses into which the New Testament is divided are still more modern. This division was invented and first used by Stephens, in an edition of the New Testament, printed in 1551. The division was made while he was on a journey from Lyons to Paris, during the intervals in which he rested in travelling. It has been adopted in all the subsequent editions of the Bible.

In regard to this division into chapters and verses, it is clear that they are of no authority whatever. It has been doubted whether the sacred writers used any points or divisions of any kind. It is certain that they were wholly unacquainted with those now in use. It is further evident, that in all cases, these divisions have not been judiciously made. The sense is often interrupted by the close of a chapter, and still oftener by the break in the verses. In reading the scriptures, little regard should be had to this division. It is of use now only for reference; and inaccurate as it is, it must evidently be substantially retained.

\* See note on that place.

The first translation of the Old Testament was made about the year 270 before the Christian era. It was made at Alexandria in Egypt into the Greek language, and probably for the use of the Jews who were scattered among pagan nations. It came to be extensively used in Judea, and no small part of the quotations in the New Testament were taken from it. It is called the Septuagint, or the version by the seventy, from a tradition that seventy elders of Israel, deputed for that purpose, were employed in making the translation.

The language spoken by our Saviour and his apostles was called Syro-Chaldaic, or more commonly the Syriac. The reason why the New Testament was not written in this language probably was, that the Greek had become the common language used throughout the eastern nations subject to the Romans.

About the beginning of the fourth century the bible was translated into Latin by Jerome. This translation was made in consequence, as he says, of the incorrectness of a version then in use, called the Italic. The translation made by Jerome, now called the Latin vulgate, is the authorized version of the church of Rome.

The English translation of the bible now in use was made in the reign of James I. This translation was intended only as an improvement of those previously in existence.

It is the concurrent testimony of all who are competent to express an opinion, that no translation of the Bible into any language has preserved so faithfully the sense of the original as the English. The fact that it has for two hundred years poured light into the minds of millions, and guided the steps of generation after generation in the way to heaven, has given to it somewhat of the venerableness which appropriately belongs to a book of God. Successive ages may correct some of its few unimportant errors; may throw light on some of its obscure passages; but to the consummation of all things, it must stand, wherever the English language is spoken, upon the whole, as the purest specimen of its power to give utterance to the meaning of



ancient tongues, and of the simple and pure majesty of the language which we speak.

The general testimony of the world ; the profound regard paid to it by men of the purest character and most extensive learning ; the fact that it has warmed the hearts of the pious, ministered to the comforts of the wretched and the dying, and guided the steps of millions to glory, for two hundred years, and now commands the high esteem of christians of so many different denominations, evinces that it is, to no ordinary extent, faithful to the original, and has a claim on the continued reverence of coming generations.

The probability is, therefore, that while the English language is spoken, and as far as it is used, the English Bible will continue, and that the words which now pour light into our minds will illuminate the understandings and mould the feelings, of unnumbered millions, in their path to immortal life.



## PREFACE

TO

### THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

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THE word Gospel means good news, or a joyful message. It commonly signifies the message itself. But it is here used to denote the book containing the record of the message.

Epiphanius says that the Gospel by Matthew was written while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome. This was about the year of our Lord 63, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem. It is now generally supposed that this gospel was written about that time. There is very high evidence in the gospel that it was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. The destruction of the holy city is clearly and minutely foretold; but there is not the slightest intimation in it that these predictions had been accomplished; a thing which we should naturally expect if the gospel was not written until after these calamities came upon the Jews. Compare Acts xi. 28. In all copies of the New Testament, and in all translations, this gospel has been placed first. This, it is probable, would not have been done, had not Matthew published his gospel before any other was written.

Matthew, the writer of this gospel, called also Levi, son of Alphaeus, was a publican, or tax-gatherer, under the Romans. See notes on Matt. ix. 9. Luke v. 27. Of his life and death little is certainly known. Socrates, a writer of the fifth century, says that he went to Ethiopia after the apostles were scattered abroad from Judea, and died a martyr in a city called Nadebbar; but by what kind of death is altogether uncertain. However, others speak of his preaching and dying in Parthia or Persia, and the diversity of their accounts seems to show that they are all without good foundation.

## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW.

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### CHAPTER I.

1 THE book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

1. 'The book of the generation' is the proper title of the chapter. It is the same as to say, 'The account of the ancestry or family, or the genealogical table, of Jesus Christ. The phrase is common in Jewish writings. Compare Gen. v. 1. See also Gen. vi. 9. The Jews kept such tables of their families, 'Jesus.' See v. 21. 'Christ.' The word 'Christ' is a Greek word, signifying anointed. The Hebrew word signifying the same thing is Messiah. Hence, Jesus is called either the Messiah or the Christ, both meaning the same. The Jews speak of the Messiah; the christians speak of him as the Christ. Anciently, when kings and priests were set apart to their office, they were anointed with oil, Lev. iv. 3; vi. 20. Ex. xxviii. 41; xxix. 7. 1 Sam. ix. 16; xv. 1. 2 Sam. xxiii. 1. To anoint, therefore, means often the same as to consecrate, or set apart to any office. It is for this reason that the name is given to the Lord Jesus, Dan. ix. 24. He was set apart by God to be the King, and High Priest, and Prophet of his people. Anointing with oil, was, moreover, supposed to be emblematic of the influences of the Holy Spirit; and as God gave him the Spirit without measure, John iii. 34, so he is called peculiarly the Anointed of God. 'The son of David.' The word 'son' among the Jews had a variety of significations. In this place it means a descendant of David; or one who was of the family of David. It was important to trace the genealogy of Jesus up to David, because the promise had been made that the Messiah should be of his family, and all the Jews expected it would be so. It would be impossible, therefore, to convince a Jew that Jesus was the Messiah, unless it could be shown that he was descended from David. See Jer. xxiii. 5. Ps. cxxxii. 10, 11; compared with Acts xiii. 23, and John vii. 42. 'The son of Abraham.' The descendant of Abraham. The promise was made to Abraham also. See Gen. xii. 3; xxi. 12; compare Heb. xi. 18. Gal. iii. 16. The Jews expected that the Messiah would be descended from him; and it was important, therefore, to trace the genealogy up to him also.

2 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judas and his brethren; 3 And Judas begat Phares and Zara of Thamar; and Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; 4 And Aram begat

Aminadab ; and Aminadab begat Naasson ; and Naasson begat Salmon ; 5 And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab ; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth ; and Obed begat Jesse ; 6 And Jesse begat David the king ; and David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias ; 7 And Solomon begat Roboam ; and Roboam begat Abia ; and Abia begat Asa ; 8 And Asa begat Josaphat ; and Josaphat begat Joram ; and Joram begat Ozias ; 9 And Ozias begat Joatham ; and Joatham begat Achaz ; and Achaz begat Ezekias ; 10 And Ezekias begat Manasses ; and Manasses begat Amon ; and Amon begat Josias ; 11 And Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon ; 12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel ; and Salathiel begat Zorobabel ; 13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud ; and Abiud begat Eliakim ; and Eliakim begat Azor ; 14 And Azor begat Sadoc ; and Sadoc begat Achim ; and Achim begat Eliud ; 15 And Eliud begat Eleazar ; and Eleazar begat Matthan ; and Matthan begat Jacob ; 16 And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ.

2—16. These verses contain the genealogy of Jesus. Luke also (ch. iii.) gives a genealogy of the Messiah. No two passages of scripture have caused more difficulty than these : and various attempts have been made to explain them. It does not comport with the design of these notes to enter minutely into an explanation of the perplexities of these passages. Most interpreters suppose that Matthew gives the genealogy of Joseph, and Luke that of Mary. They were both descended from David, but in different lines. It has been said also that Joseph was the legal son and heir of Heli, though the real son of Jacob, and thus the two lines terminated in him.

There are considerations which should set the matter at rest. No difficulty was ever found or alleged, in regard to them, by any of the early enemies of christianity. There is no evidence that they ever adduced them as containing a contradiction. Now, it is to be remembered that the Jews were fully competent to show that these tables were incorrect, if they were really so. And it is clear that they were fully disposed, if possible, to do it. The fact, therefore, that it is not done, is clear evidence that they thought them to be correct. The same may be said of the acute

pagans who wrote against christianity. The tables here are good evidence to the only point that the writers wished to establish: that is, to show to the Jews that Jesus of Nazareth was descended from David. And all that can be asked now is, whether they copied the tables of those families correctly. It is clear that no one can prove that they did not so copy them.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ *are* fourteen generations.

17. This division of the names in their genealogy was doubtless adopted for the purpose of aiding the memory. It was common among the Jews, and other similar instances are preserved. There were three leading persons and events that nearly, or quite divided their history into equal portions: Abraham, David, and the captivity. From one to the other was about fourteen generations, and, by omitting a few names, it was sufficiently accurate to be made a general guide or directory in remembering their history. 'Carrying away into Babylon.' This refers to the captivity of Jerusalem, and the removal of the Jews to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar, 588 years before Christ. See 2 Chron. xxxvi.

18 ¶ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

18. 'On this wise.' Thus. In this manner. 'Espoused.' Betrothed, or engaged to be married. There was commonly an interval of ten or twelve months among the Jews between the contract of marriage and the celebration of the nuptials. See Gen. xxiv. 55. Judges xiv. 8. Yet such was the nature of this engagement, that unfaithfulness to each other was deemed adultery. See Deut. xxii. 25, 28. 'With child by the Holy Ghost.' See Note, Luke i. 35.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

19. 'Her husband.' The word in the original does not imply that they were married. It means here the man to whom she was espoused. 'A just man.' It means that he was kind, tender, merciful; so attached to Mary, that he was not willing that she should be exposed to public shame. He sought, therefore, secretly to dissolve the connexion without the punishment.



commonly inflicted for adultery. The word 'just' has not unfrequently this meaning of mildness, or mercy. See 1 John i. 9. 'A public example.' To expose her to public shame or infamy. 'Put her away privately.' The law of Moses gave the husband the power of divorce, Deut xxiv. 1. We may remark here, on the greatness of this trial to both Mary and Joseph. Joseph was attached to her, but Joseph was not yet satisfied of her innocence. We may learn how to put our trust in God. He will defend the innocent. God had so ordered it that she was betrothed to a man mild, amiable, and tender; and, in due time, Joseph was apprized of the truth in the case, and took his faithful and beloved wife to his bosom. Thus our only aim should be to preserve a conscience void of offence; and God will guard our reputation. We may be assailed, or appearances may be against us; but in due time God will take care to vindicate our character, and save us from ruin.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife; for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

20. 'He thought on these things.' He did not act hastily. It was a case deeply affecting his happiness, his character, and the reputation and character of his chosen companion. God will guide the thoughtful and the anxious. And when we have looked patiently at a perplexing subject, and know not what to do, then God, as in the case of Joseph, will direct our way, Psa. xxv. 9. 'The angel of the Lord.' The word angel literally means a messenger. It is applied chiefly in the scriptures to those invisible holy beings who have not fallen into sin, who live in heaven, 1 Tim. v. 21; compare Jude 6; and who are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 13, 14. Dan. ix. 21. Various ways were employed by them in making known the will of God—by dreams, visions, assuming a human appearance, &c. 'In a dream.' This was a common way of making known the will of God to the ancient prophets and people of God, Gen. xx. 3; xxxvii. 5; xli. 1. 1 Kings iii. 5. Dan. vii. 1. Job iv. 13—15. In what way it was ascertained that these dreams were from God, cannot now be told. It is sufficient for us to know that in this way many of the prophecies were communicated; and to remark that now there is no evidence that we are to put reliance on our dreams. 'Fear not.' Do not hesitate, or have fears about her virtue and purity. Do not fear that she will be unworthy of you, or will disgrace you.

21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

21. 'His name Jesus.' The name Jesus is the same as Saviour. It is derived from the verb signifying to save. In Hebrew it is the same as Joshua. It was a very common name among the Jews. 'He shall save.' This expresses the same as the name, and on this account the name was given to him. He saves men by having died to redeem them; by giving the Spirit to renew them, John xvi. 7, 8; by his power in enabling them to overcome their spiritual enemies; in defending them from danger; in guiding them in the path of duty; in sustaining them in trials and in death; and he will raise them up at the last day, and exalt them to a world of purity and love. 'His people.' Those whom the Father has given to him. The Jews were called the people of God, because he had chosen them to himself, and regarded them as his peculiar and beloved people, separate from all the nations of the earth. Christians are called the people of Christ, because it was the purpose of the Father to give them to him, Isa. liii. 11. John vi. 37; and because in due time he came to redeem them to himself, Titus ii. 14. 1 Peter i. 2. 'From their sins.' This is the great business of Jesus in coming and dying. It is not to save men *in* their sins, but *from* their sins. Sinners could not be happy in heaven. It would be a place of wretchedness to the guilty. The design of Jesus was, therefore, to save from sin; by dying to make an atonement, Titus ii. 14, and by renewing the heart, and purifying the soul, and preparing his people for a pure and holy heaven. And from this we may learn:

1. That Jesus had a design in coming into the world; he came to save his people; and that design will surely be accomplished.
2. We have no evidence that we are his people, unless we are saved from the power and dominion of sin. A mere profession of being his people will not answer. It is impossible that we can be christians, if we indulge in sin, and live in the practice of any known iniquity.
3. That all professing christians might feel, that there is no salvation unless it is from sin, and that they can never be admitted to a holy heaven hereafter, unless they are made pure by the blood of Jesus here.

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,  
 23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

22, 23. The prophecy here quoted is recorded in Isa. vii. 14. It was delivered about 740 years before Christ, in the reign of Ahaz, king of Judah. It implies that the conception of Christ was entirely miraculous, or that the body of the Messiah was created directly by the power of God, agreeably to the declaration in Heb. x. 5. 'Emmanuel.' This is a Hebrew word, and means

literally, God with us. Matthew doubtless understood this word as denoting that the Messiah was really 'God with us,' or that the Divine nature was united to the human. But this was its meaning as applicable to the Messiah. It was fitly expressive of his character; and in this sense it was fulfilled. Matthew had just given an account of his miraculous conception; of his being begotten by the Holy Ghost. God was therefore his Father. He was Divine as well as human. His appropriate name was 'God with us.' And though the mere use of such a name as was common in the Old Testament, would not prove that he had a Divine nature, as it did not in the case of Isaiah, yet as Matthew uses it, and meant evidently to apply it, it does prove that Jesus was more than a man; that he was God as well as man. And it is this which gives glory to the plan of redemption. It is this which is the wonder of angels. It is this which makes the plan so vast, so grand, so full of instruction and comfort to christians. See Phil. ii. 6—8. It is this which sheds such peace and joy into the sinner's heart; which removes the sense of sin; and saves from death; and renders the condescension of God in redemption so great, and his character so lovely.

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: 25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born son: and he called his name JESUS.

25. The scriptures do not affirm that she had no children afterwards. The accounts in the New Testament lead us to suppose that she had. See Matt. xiii. 55, 56. 'Her first-born son.' Her eldest son, or he that by the law had the privilege of birth-right. It was the name given to the son first born, whether there were others or not. 'His name Jesus.' This was given by Divine appointment, v. 21. It was conferred on him on the eighth day, at the time of his circumcision, Luke ii. 21.

## CHAPTER II.

1 NOW when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem.

1. See the full account of his birth in Luke ii. 1—20. Bethlehem, the birth-place of Christ, was a small town about six miles southwest of Jerusalem. The word 'Bethlehem', denotes 'house of bread,' perhaps given to the place on account of its great fertility. It was also called Ephrata, a word supposed likewise to signify fertility, Gen. xxxv. 19. Ruth iv. 11. Psalm cxxxii. 6. It was called the city of David, Luke ii. 4, because it was the city of his nativity, 1 Sam. xvi. 1, 18. It was called 'Bethlehem of Judea,' to distinguish it from a town of the same name in

Galilee, Josh. xix. 15. The town is situated on an eminaence, in the midst of hills and vales. At present it contains about 200 houses. 'Herod the king.' Judea, where our Saviour was born, was a province of the Roman empire. It was, about 63 years before, placed under tribute by Pompey. Herod received his appointment from the Romans, and had reigned at the time of the birth of Jesus 34 years. Though he was permitted to be called king, yet he was in all respects dependent on the Roman emperor. At this time, Augustus was emperor of Rome. The world was at peace. All the known nations of the earth were united under the Roman emperor. Intercourse between different nations was easy and safe. Similar laws prevailed. The use of one language, the Greek, was general throughout the world. The providence of God was remarkable in fitting the nations, in this manner, for the easy and rapid spread of the christian religion among all nations. 'Wise men.' The persons here mentioned were philosophers, priests, or astronomers. They dwelt chiefly in Persia and Arabia. They were the learned men of the eastern nations. They were held in high esteem, were admitted as counsellors, and followed the camps in war to give advice. 'From the east.' It is unknown whether they came from Persia or Arabia. Both countries might be denoted by the word 'east'—that is, east from Judea.

2 Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.

2. There was, at this time, a prevalent expectation that some remarkable personage was about to appear in Judea. The Jews were anxiously looking for the coming of the Messiah. By computing the time mentioned by Daniel, chap. ix. 25—27, they knew that the period was approaching when the Messiah should appear. This personage, they supposed, would be a temporal prince, and they were expecting that he would deliver them from Roman bondage. Many Jews, at that time, dwelt in Egypt, in Rome, and in Greece; many also had gone to eastern countries, and in every place they carried their scriptures, and diffused the expectation that some remarkable person was about to appear. 'His star.' A star or comet was regarded as an omen of some remarkable event. These wise men considered this as an evidence that the long expected Prince was born. It is possible that they had been led to this thought by the prophecy of Balaam, Numb. xxiv. 17, There shall come a star out of Jacob, &c. What this star was, is not known. It is most probable that it was a luminous appearance, or meteor. It is possible that the same thing is meant which is mentioned by Luke ii. 9, 'The glory of the Lord shone round about them,' (see note on this place,) a great splendid light appeared shining around



them. That light might have been visible from afar, and have been seen by the wise men in the east. 'In the east.' This does not mean that they had seen the star to the east of themselves, but that, when they were in the east, they had seen this star. As this star was in the direction of Jerusalem, it must have been west of them. It might be translated, 'We, being in the east, have seen this star.' It is called his star, because they supposed it to be intended to indicate the time and place of his birth. 'To worship him.' They regarded him as king of the Jews. They came to honour him as such. The original word means to prostrate one's self before another; to fall down and pay homage to another. This was the mode in which homage was paid to earthly kings. See the same meaning of the word in Matt. xx. 20; xviii. 26. Acts x. 25. Luke xiv. 10.

3 When Herod the king had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

3. 'He was troubled.' Herod had obtained the kingdom by great crimes, and by shedding much blood. He was therefore easily alarmed by any remarkable appearances; and the fact that this star appeared, and that it was regarded as proof that the king of the Jews was born, alarmed him. 'All Jerusalem.' The people of Jerusalem, and particularly the friends of Herod. There were many waiting for the consolation of Israel, and to whom the coming of the Messiah would be a matter of joy; but Herod's friends would doubtless be alarmed at his coming.

4 And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born.

4. 'The chief priests.' By the chief priests here are meant not only the high-priest and his deputy, but also the heads or chiefs of the twenty-four classes into which David had divided the sacerdotal families, 1 Chron. xxiii. 6; xxiv. 2 Chron. viii. 14; xxxvi. 14. Ezra viii. 24. 'Scribes.' By the scribes, in the New Testament, are meant learned men, men skilled in the law, and members of the great council of the nation. They kept the records of the court of justice, the registers in the synagogues, wrote their articles of contract and sale, their bills of divorce, &c. They were also called lawyers, Matt. xxii. 35, and doctors of the law, Luke v. 17. They were called scribes from the fact of their writing the public records. By the chief priests and scribes here mentioned is denoted the sanhedrim or great council of the nation. This was composed of seventy-two men, and had the charge of the affairs of the nation. 'Demanded of them.' Inquired, or asked of them. As they were the learned men of the nation, and as it was their business to study and explain the Old Testament, they were presumed to know what the prophecies had declared on that point.

5 And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, 6 And thou, Bethlehem, *in* the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

5, 6. 'By the prophet.' The sanhedrim answered without hesitation. It was settled by prophecy. This prophecy is found in Micah v. 2. In that prophecy both the place of his birth and the character of the Messiah are so clearly set forth, that there was no room to doubt. 'Art not the least.' In Micah, 'though thou be little.' Though a small place so far as population is concerned, yet it shall not be small, or least in honour; for the Messiah shall be born there. His birth gave the place an honour which could not be conferred on the larger cities by all their numbers, their splendour, and their wealth. 'A Governor.' A Ruler. This is one of the characters of the Messiah, who is the King of his people, John xviii. 36, 37. The word 'rule' here means to rule as a shepherd does his flock, in faithfulness and tenderness. Compare John x. 11. Isa. xl. 10, 11; ix. 7.

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared.

7. 'Privily.' Secretly, privately. 'Diligently.' Accurately, exactly. He did this because he naturally concluded that the star appeared at the time of his birth, and he wished to know precisely how old the child was.

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found *him*, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also.

8. 'Go and search diligently, &c.' Herod took all possible means to obtain accurate information respecting the child, that he might be sure of destroying him. He not only ascertained the probable time of his birth, and the place where he would be born, but he sent the wise men that they might actually see him, and bring him word. All this might have looked suspicious if he had not clothed it with the appearance of religion. He said to them, therefore, that he did it that he might go and worship him also. 1. Wicked men often cloak their evil designs under the appearance of religion. They attempt to deceive those who are really good, and to make them suppose that they have the same design. But God cannot be deceived, and he will bring them to punishment. 2. Wicked men often attempt to make use of the pious to advance their evil purposes. Men like Herod will stop at nothing

if they can carry their ends. They endeavour to deceive the simple, allure the unsuspecting, and to beguile the weak, to answer their purposes of wickedness. 3. The plans of wicked men are often well laid. They occupy a long time. They make diligent inquiry. They often put on the appearance of religion. But God sees the design; and though men are deceived, yet God cannot be, Prov. xv. 3.

9 When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star which they saw in the east went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. 10 When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

9, 10. 'The star—went before them.' It is not unlikely that they lost sight of the star after they had commenced their journey from the east. It is probable that it appeared to them first in the direction of Jerusalem. They concluded that the expected King had been born, and immediately commenced their journey to Jerusalem. When they arrived there, it was important that they should be directed to the very place where he was, and the star again appeared. It was for this reason that they rejoiced. And this shows, 1. That the birth of Jesus was an affair of great moment, worthy of the Divine direction of these men to find the place of his nativity. 2. God will guide those who are disposed to find the Saviour. Even if for a time the light should be withdrawn, yet it will again appear, and direct us in the way to the Redeemer. 3. Devotion to Christ should fill us with joy. He is the way, the truth, and the life; the Saviour, the Friend, the all in all; there is no other way of life, and there is no peace to the soul till he is found. When we are guided to him, therefore, our hearts should overflow with joy and praise; and we should humbly and thankfully follow every direction that leads to the Son of God, John xii. 35, 36.

11 ¶ And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down and worshipped him: and, when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

11. 'Fell down, and worshipped him;' see on v. 2. 'They presented unto him gifts.' As King of the Jews, because they supposed he was to be a distinguished prince and conqueror. It was customary at the birth of a prince to show respect for him by making him presents, or offerings of this kind, and to approach a great personage with gifts. See Gen. xxxii. 14; xliii. 11. 1 Sam. x. 27. 1 Kings x. 2. Ps. lxxii. 10. 15. 'Frankincense.' This was a production of Arabia. It was obtained from a tree by

making incisions in the bark, and suffering the gum to flow out. It was highly fragrant when burned, and was therefore used in worship, when it was burned as a pleasant offering. See Gen. viii. 21. Eph. v. 2. It is produced in the East Indies, but chiefly in Arabia; and it has been supposed probable that the wise men came from Arabia. 'Myrrh.' This was also a production of Arabia, and was obtained from a tree in the same manner as frankincense. The name denotes bitterness, and was given to it on account of its great bitterness. It was used chiefly in embalming the dead, because it had the property of preserving bodies from putrefaction. Compare John xix. 39. It was much used in Egypt and in Judea. These offerings were the most valuable things which their country produced. They evinced their high regard for Jesus, their belief that he was to be an illustrious prince: and the fact that their deed is recorded with approbation shows us, that we should offer our most valuable possessions, our all to the Lord Jesus Christ. Wise men came from far to do him homage, and bowed down, and presented their best gifts and offerings. It is right that we give to him also our hearts, our worship, our property, our all.

12 And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

12. If they had given Herod precise information where he was, it would have been easy for him to send forth and slay Jesus. Hence we learn that God will watch over those whom he loves; that he knows how to deliver his own out of the hands of those who would destroy them.

13 And when they were departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young child to destroy him.

13. 'The angel.' See ch. i. 20. 'Flee into Egypt.' Egypt is situated to the south-west of Judea. It was at this time a Roman province. There were many Jews there, a temple and synagogues; Joseph would be among his own countrymen, and yet beyond the reach of Herod. The very land which was the land of bondage and groaning for the Jews, became now the land of refuge and safety for the new-born King of Judea. God can overturn nations and kingdoms, so that those whom he loves shall be safe any where.

14 When he arose, he took the young child and his mother by night, and departed into Egypt: 15 And



was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Out of Egypt have I called my son.

15. 'The death of Herod.' The best chronologers have supposed that he died somewhere about two years after the birth of Christ. Nor can it be determined exactly at what age Jesus was taken into Egypt. It seems probable that he was supposed to be a year old, (see v. 16,) and of course the time that he remained in Egypt was not long. 'That it might be fulfilled,' &c. This language is recorded in Hosea xi. 1. It there evidently speaks of God's calling his people out of Egypt under Moses. See Ex. iv. 22, 23. It might be said to be fulfilled in his calling Jesus from Egypt, because the words in Hosea aptly expressed this also.

16 ¶ Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the wise men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the wise men.

16. 'Mocked of the wise men.' When he saw that they did not return as he had expected. It does not mean that they did it for the purpose of mocking or deriding him, but that he was disappointed in their not returning. 'Exceeding wroth.' Very angry. He had been disappointed and deceived. He expected to send an executioner and kill Jesus alone. But since he was disappointed in this, he thought he should accomplish the same thing, and be sure to destroy him, if he sent forth and put all the children in the place to death. This is an illustration of the power of wickedness and anger. It stops at nothing. If it cannot accomplish just what it wishes, it does not hesitate to go much farther, and accomplish much more evil than it at first designed. He that has a wicked heart, and indulges in anger, knows not where it will end, and will commonly commit far more evil than he at first intended. 'Slew all the children.' That is, all the male children. This is implied in the original. 'In all the coasts thereof.' The word coast is commonly applied now to the regions around the sea, as the sea-coast; here it means the adjacent places, the settlements or hamlets around Bethlehem. All that were in that neighbourhood. We do not know how large a place Bethlehem was; nor, of course, how many were slain. But it was not a large place, and the number could not be very great. 'According to the time,' &c. He had endeavoured to ascertain of the wise men the exact time of his birth. He supposed he knew the age of Jesus. He slew, therefore, all that were of his age; that is, all that were born about the time when the star appeared, perhaps from six months old to two years. Herod was an odious and bloody tyrant, and

the facts of his reign prove that he was abundantly capable of this wickedness. The following bloody deeds will show that the slaying of the infants was in perfect accordance with his character. Aristobulus, brother of his wife Mariamne, was murdered by his directions at eighteen years of age, because the people of Jerusalem had shown some affection for his person. In the seventh year of his reign he put to death Hyrcanus, grandfather of Mariamne, then eighty years of age, and who had formerly saved Herod's life; a man who had, in every revolution of fortune, shown a mild and peaceable disposition. His beloved and beautiful wife, Mariamne, was publicly executed, and her mother Alexandra followed soon after. Alexander and Aristobulus, his two sons by Mariamne, were strangled in prison by his orders, upon groundless suspicions, when they were at man's estate, were married, and had children. In his last sickness, he sent orders throughout Judea, requiring the presence of all the chief men of the nation at Jericho. When they were come he had them all shut up in the circus; and calling for his sister Salome, and her husband Alexas, he told them—'My life is now short. I know the Jewish people, and nothing will please them better than my death. You have them now in your custody. As soon as the breath is out of my body, and before my death can be known, do you let in the soldiers upon them, and kill them. All Judea, then, and every family, will, though unwillingly, mourn at my death.' Surely there could be no cruelty which such a man was not capable of perpetrating.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, 18 In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

17, 18. 'Jeremy.' Jeremiah. This quotation is taken from Jeremiah xxxi. 15. The word 'fulfilled,' here is taken evidently in the sense that the words in Jeremiah aptly express the event which Matthew was recording. The original design of this prophecy was to describe the sorrowful departure of the people into captivity, after the conquest of Jerusalem by Nebuzaradan. The captives were assembled at Rama, Jeremiah himself being in chains, and there the fate of those who had escaped in the destruction of the city was decided at the will of the conqueror, Jer. xl. 1. The sadness of such a scene is well expressed in the language of the prophet, and no less beautifully and fitly applies to the melancholy event which the evangelist records. Rama was a small town in the tribe of Benjamin, not far from Bethlehem. Rachel was the mother of Benjamin, and was buried near to Rama, Gen. xxxv. 16—19. By a beautiful figure of speech, the prophet introduces the mother weeping over the tribe, her children, and

over the fallen destiny of Israel, and the calamities about to come upon the land. The language and the image aptly and beautifully expressed the sorrows of the mothers in Bethlehem, when Herod slew their infant children. We may remark here, that the sacred writers were cautious of speaking of characters. Here was one of the worst men in the world, committing one of the most awful crimes, and yet there is not a single mark of exclamation; not a single reference to any other part of his conduct. What was to their purpose they record; what was not, they left to others. This is the nature of religion. It does not speak evil of others, except when necessary, nor then take pleasure in it.

19 ¶ But, when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt.

19. 'Herod was dead.' See note on v. 15. Herod left three sons, and the kingdom was at his death divided between them. To Archelaus was given Judea, Idumea, and Samaria; to Philip, Batanea, Trachonitis, &c.; to Antipas, Galilee and Peræa. Each of these was also called Herod, and these are the Herods who are mentioned commonly in the New Testament.

20 Saying, Arise, and take the young child and his mother, and go into the land of Israel; for they are dead which sought the young child's life. 21 And he arose, and took the young child and his mother, and came into the land of Israel. 22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judea in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of God in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

22. Archelaus possessed a cruel and tyrannical disposition similar to his father. At one of the passovers he caused three thousand of the people to be put to death in the temple and city. Knowing his character, and fearing that he would not be safe there, Joseph hesitated about going there. 'The parts of Galilee.' The country of Galilee. At this time the land of Palestine was divided into three parts: Galilee, on the north; Samaria, in the middle; and Judea, on the south. Galilee was under the government of Herod Antipas, who was comparatively a mild prince; and in his dominions Joseph might find safety.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth; that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

23. Nazareth was a small town, situated in Galilee, west of Capernaum, and not far from Cana. It was built partly in a valley, and partly on the declivity of a hill, Luke iv. 29. A hill

is yet pointed out, to the south of Nazareth, as the one from which the people of the place attempted to precipitate the Saviour. It was a place, at that time, proverbial for wickedness, John i. 46. It is now a large village, with a convent and two churches. 'That it might be fulfilled by the prophets,' &c. The words here are not found in any of the books of the Old Testament. Matthew refers not to any particular place, but to the leading characteristics of the prophecies respecting him. The following remarks may make this clear. 1. He does not say, 'by the prophet,' as in ch. i. 22; ii. 5, 15, but 'by the prophets,' meaning no one particularly, but the general character of the prophecies. 2. The leading and most prominent prophecies respecting him were, that he was to be of humble life, to be despised, and rejected. See Isa. liii. 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 12. Ps. xxii. 3. The phrase, 'he shall be called,' means the same as 'he shall be.' 4. The character of the people of Nazareth was such that they were proverbially despised and contemned, John i. 46; vii. 52. To come from Nazareth, therefore, or to be a Nazarene, was the same as to be despised, and esteemed of low birth; to be a root out of dry ground, having no form or comeliness. And this was the same as had been predicted by the prophets. When Matthew says, therefore, that the prophecies were fulfilled, it means that the predictions of the prophets that the Messiah should be of humble life, and rejected, were fully accomplished in his being an inhabitant of Nazareth, and despised as such.

## CHAPTER III.

1 IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

1. It is not probable that John began to baptize or preach long before the Saviour entered on his ministry; and, consequently, from the time that is mentioned at the close of the second chapter, to that mentioned in the beginning of the third, an interval of twenty-five or more years elapsed. 'John the Baptist.' Or John the baptizer. So called from his principal office, that of baptizing. 'Preaching.' The word rendered to preach, means, to proclaim in the manner of a public crier; to make proclamation. 'In the wilderness of Judea.' This country was situated along the Jordan, and the Dead Sea, to the east of Jerusalem. The word translated 'wilderness', does not denote a place entirely destitute of inhabitants; but a mountainous, rough, and thinly-peopled country, better fitted for pasture than for tilling. There were inhabitants in those places, and even villages, but they were the comparatively unsettled portions of the country, 1 Sam. xxv. 1, 2. In the time of Joshua there were six cities in what was then called a wilderness, Joshua xv. 61, 62.



2 And saying, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

2. Repentance implies sorrow for past offences, 2 Cor. vii. 10; a deep sense of the evil of sin as committed against God, Ps. li. 4; and a full purpose to turn from transgression, and to lead a holy life. A true penitent has sorrow for sin, not only because it is ruinous to his soul, but chiefly because it is an offence against God, and is that abominable thing which he hates, Jer. xlv. 4. It is produced by seeing the great danger and misery to which it exposes us; the justice and holiness of God, Job xlii. 6; and that our sins have been committed against Christ, and were the cause of his death, Zech. xii. 10. Luke xxii. 61, 62. There are two words in the New Testament translated repentance; one of which denotes a change of mind, or a reformation of life; and the other sorrow, or regret that sin has been committed. The word used here is the former: calling the Jews to a change of life, or a reformation of conduct. In the time of John the nation had become extremely wicked and corrupt. Both he and Christ began their ministry by calling to repentance. 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' The expectation of such a kingdom was taken from the Old Testament, especially from Daniel, ch. vii. 13, 14. The prophets had told of a successor to David, who should sit on his throne, 1 Kings ii. 4; viii. 25. Jer. xxxiii. 17. The Jews expected a great national deliverer. They supposed that when the Messiah should appear, all the dead would be raised; that the judgment would take place; and that the enemies of the Jews would be destroyed, and their nation advanced to great dignity and honour.

The language in which they were accustomed to describe this event was retained by our Saviour and his Apostles. Yet he early attempted to correct the common notions respecting his reign. This was one design, doubtless, of John in preaching repentance. Instead of summoning them to military exercises, and collecting an army, which would have been in accordance with their expectations, he called them to a change of life; to the doctrine of repentance; a state of things far more accordant with the approach of a kingdom of purity.

The phrases, 'kingdom of God,' &c., have been supposed to have a considerable variety of meaning. Some have thought that they refer to the state of things in heaven; others, that they mean the church, or the reign of Christ in the hearts of his people. There can be no doubt that there is reference in the words to the condition of things in heaven, after this life. But the church of God is a preparatory state to that beyond the grave; a state in which Christ pre-eminently rules and reigns; and it means, therefore, the state of things which the Messiah was to set up—his spiritual reign begun in the church on earth, and completed in heaven.

The phrase would be best translated 'the reign of God draws

near,<sup>2</sup> or the time when Christ would reign is at hand. The time when Christ should set up his kingdom, or begin his dominion on earth, under the Christian economy, was about to commence. The phrase should not be confined to any period of that reign, but includes his whole dominion over his people on earth, and in heaven.

The word heaven, or heavens, as it is in the original, means sometimes the place, so called, and sometimes is put for the Great Being whose residence is there; as in Daniel iv. 26; 'the Heavens do rule.' See also Mark xi. 30. Luke xv. 18. As that kingdom was one of purity, it was proper that the people should prepare themselves for it by turning from their sins.

3 For this is he that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

3. 'The prophet Esaias.' The prophet Isaiah. Esaias is the Greek mode of writing the name. This passage is taken from Isaiah xl. 3. It is here said to have been spoken in reference to John, the forerunner of Christ. The language is such as was familiar to the Jews, and such as they would understand. Anciently, it was customary in the march of armies to send messengers, or pioneers, before them, to proclaim their approach; to provide for them; to remove obstructions; to make roads, level hills, fill up vallies, &c.

As applied to John, it means; that he was sent to remove obstructions, and to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah; like a herald going before a host on the march, to make preparation for their coming.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

4. 'His raiment of camel's hair.' His clothing. This is not the fine hair of the camel from which cloth is made, called camlet, nor the more elegant stuff, brought from the East Indies, under the name of camel's hair; but the long, shaggy hair of the camel, from which a coarse, cheap cloth is made, still worn by the poorer classes in the East, and by monks. This dress of the camel's hair, and a leathern girdle, it seems, was the common dress of the prophets, 2 Kings i. 8. Zech. xiii. 4. 'His meat was locusts.' His food. These were the food of the common people. Among the Greeks, the poorest of the people used to eat them; and the fact that John made his food of them is significant of his great poverty and humble life. The Jews were allowed to eat them, Lev. xi. 22. Locusts are flying insects, and are of various kinds. The green locusts are about two inches in length,

and about the thickness of a man's finger. The common brown locust is about three inches long. The general form and appearance of the locust is not unlike the grasshopper. They were one of the plagues of Egypt, Exod. x. In eastern countries they are very numerous. They appear in such quantities as to darken the sky, and devour in a short time every green thing. The whole earth is sometimes covered with them for many leagues, Joel i. 4. Isa. xxxiii. 4. They are sometimes dried and salted, or ground into a kind of cake, &c. 'Wild honey.' This was probably the honey that he found in the rocks of the wilderness. Palestine was often called the land flowing with milk and honey, Exod. iii. 8, 17; xiii. 5. Bees were kept with great care; and great numbers of them were found in the fissures of trees and the clefts of rocks.

5 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan,

5. 'Jerusalem.' The people of Jerusalem. 'All Judea.' Many people from Judea. Not literally all the people, but great multitudes went. Jerusalem was in the part of the country called Judea. Judea was situated on the west side of the Jordan. 'Region about Jordan.' Near to Jordan.

6 And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

6. 'Were baptized.' The word baptize here means to cleanse or wash any thing by the application of water. It was a solemn rite of washing, significant of cleansing from their former sins, and purifying them for the peculiar service of Jehovah. As it was used by John it was a significant rite, or ceremony, denoting the putting away of impurity, and a purpose to be pure in heart and life. The Hebrew word (Tahal) which is rendered by the word baptize, occurs in the Old Testament in the following places, viz.: Lev. iv. 6; xiv. 6, 51. Num. xix. 18. Ruth ii. 14. Exod. xii. 22. Deut. xxxiii. 24. Ezek. xxiii. 15. Job ix. 31. Lev. ix. 9. 1 Sam. xiv. 27. 2 Kings v. 14; viii. 15. Gen. xxxvii. 31. Joshua iii. 15. It occurs in no other places; and from examination of these passages, its meaning among the Jews is to be derived.

The river Jordan is the eastern boundary of Palestine, or Judea. It rises in mount Lebanon, at the north of Palestine, and runs in a southerly direction, under ground, for thirteen miles, and then bursts forth at Cesarea Philippi. It then unites with two small streams, and runs some miles farther, and is emptied into lake Merom. From this small lake it flows thirteen miles, and then falls into the lake Gennesareth, otherwise called the sea of Tiberias, or the sea of Galilee. Through the middle of this lake, which is sixteen miles long and five broad, it flows undisturbed,

and preserves a southerly direction for about seventy miles, and then falls into the Dead Sea, at its entrance into which it is about ninety feet wide. It flows in many places with great rapidity, and when swollen by rains pours like an impetuous torrent. It formerly regularly overflowed its banks in time of harvest, that is, in March, in some places six hundred paces, Josh. iii. 15. 1 Chron. xii. 15. These banks are covered with small trees and shrubs, and afford a convenient dwelling for wild beasts. Allusion is often made to these thickets in the sacred scriptures, Jer. xlix, 19; 1. 44.

7 ¶ But when he saw many of the pharisees and sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

7. 'Pharisees and sadducees.' The Jews were divided into three great sects, the pharisees; the sadducees; and the essenes. In addition to these, some smaller sects are mentioned in the New Testament, and by Josephus: the herodians, probably political friends of Herod; the galileans, a branch of the pharisees; and the therapeutæ, a branch of the essenes, but converts from the Greeks. The principal of these sects are supposed to have originated about 150 years before Christ, as they are mentioned by Josephus about that time. Of course nothing is said of them in the Old Testament, as that was finished about 400 years before the christian era.

1. The pharisees were the most numerous and wealthy sect of the Jews. They derived their name from the Hebrew word *Pharash*, which signifies, to set apart, or to separate, because they separated themselves from the rest of their countrymen, to peculiar strictness in religion. Their leading tenets were the following: that the world was governed by fate, or by a fixed decree of God; that the souls of men were immortal, and were either eternally happy or miserable beyond the grave; that the dead would be raised; that there were angels, good and bad; that God was under obligation to bestow peculiar favour on the Jews; and that they were justified by the merits of Abraham. They were proud, haughty, self-righteous, and held the common people in great disrespect, John vii. 49. They sought the offices of the state, and affected great dignity. They were ostentatious in their religious worship, praying at the corners of the streets, and seeking publicity in the bestowment of alms. They sought principally external cleanness; and dealt much in ceremonial ablutions and washing.

In addition to the written laws, they held to a multitude which they maintained had come down from Moses by tradition. They were in general a corrupt, hypocritical, office-seeking, haughty class of men. There were, however, some among them of a better character. See Acts v. 34.



II. The sadducees are supposed to have taken their name from Sadok, who flourished about 260 years before the christian era. He was a pupil of Antigonus Sochæus, president of the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. He had taught the duty of serving God disinterestedly, without the hope of reward, or the fear of punishment. Hence Sadok, not properly understanding the doctrine of his master, drew the inference that there was no future state of rewards or punishments; and on this belief he founded the sect. The other notions which they held, all to be traced to this leading doctrine, were: 1. That there is no resurrection, neither angel nor spirit, Matt. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8; and that the soul of man perishes with the body. 2. They rejected the doctrine of fate. 3. They rejected all traditions, and professed to receive only the books of the Old Testament.

They were far less numerous than the pharisees, but their want of numbers was compensated, in some degree, by their wealth and standing in society. Though they did not generally seek office, yet several of them were advanced to the high-priesthood.

III. The essenes, a third sect of the Jews, are not mentioned in the New Testament. They differed from both the pharisees and sadducees. They were Jewish hermits, passing their time little in society, but mostly in places of obscurity and retirement. It is not probable, therefore, that our Saviour often, if ever, encountered them.

The other sects of the Jews were too insignificant to demand particular notice here. It may be said of the Jews generally that they possessed little of the spirit of religion; that they had corrupted some of the most important doctrines of the bible; and that they were an ignorant, proud, ambitious, and sensual people.

'Generation of vipers.' Vipers are a species of serpents. There is no serpent that is more poisonous than a viper. The word serpent, or viper, is used to denote both cunning and malignancy, or wickedness. In the phrase, 'Be ye wise as serpents,' it means be prudent, or wise, referring to the account in Genesis iii. 1—6. Among the Jews the serpent was regarded as the symbol of cunning, circumspection, and prudence. It was so regarded in the Egyptian hieroglyphics. In the phrase, 'generation of vipers,' Matt. xii. 34, the viper is the symbol of wickedness, of envenomed malice—a symbol drawn from the venom of the serpent. The phrase is used in this place to denote their malignancy and wickedness. See Matt. xii. 34; xxiii. 33. 'Wrath to come.' John expresses his astonishment that sinners so hardened and so hypocritical as they were, should have been induced to flee from coming wrath. 'The wrath to come' means the Divine indignation, or the punishment that will come on the guilty. See 1 Thess. i. 10; ii. 16.

8 Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance

8. 'Bring forth therefore fruits,' &c. That is, the proper fruits of reformation, the proper evidence that you are sincere. Do not bring your cunning and dissimulation to this work; carry not your hypocrisy into your professed repentance, but evince your sincerity by forsaking sins. 'Fruits.' Conduct. See Matt. vii. 16—19. 'Meet for repentance.' The proper expression of repentance.

9 And think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to *our* father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

9. They regarded it as sufficient righteousness that they were descended from so holy a man as Abraham, John viii. 33—37, 53. John assured them that this was a matter of small consequence in the sight of God. Of the very stones of the Jordan he could raise up children to Abraham. The meaning seems to be this: God, from these stones, could more easily raise up those who should be worthy children of Abraham, or be like him, than simply, because you are descendants of Abraham, make you, who are proud and hypocritical, subjects of the Messiah's kingdom. Mere nativity, or the privileges of birth, avail nothing where there is not righteousness of life. Some have supposed, however, that by 'these stones' he meant the Roman soldiers, or the heathen, who attended on his ministry; and that God could of them raise up children to Abraham.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

10. Laying the axe at the root of a tree is intended to denote that the tree is to be cut down. A searching, trying kind of preaching has been commenced. Principles and conduct are to be investigated. No art, no dissimulations, are to be successful. Men are to be tried by their lives, not by birth, or profession. The very root shall feel the blow, and the fruitless tree shall fall. This is a beautiful and very striking figure, and a very direct threatening of future wrath. John regarded his hearers as making a fair and promising profession, as trees do in blossom. But he told them, also, that they should bear fruit as well as flowers. Their professions of repentance were not enough. They should show, by a holy life, that their profession was genuine.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and *with* fire:

11. To keep the feet from the sharp stones, or the burning sand, small pieces of wood were fastened to the soles, called sandals. Leather, or skins of beasts dressed, were afterwards used. The foot was not covered at all; but the sandal, or piece of leather or wood, was bound by thongs. The people put off these when they entered a house, and put them on when they left it. To loose and bind on sandals, on such occasions, was the business of the lowest servants. It was an expression of great humility; and John says that he was not worthy to be the servant of Him who should come after him. 'Shall baptize you.' Shall send upon you the Holy Spirit. The Spirit of God is frequently represented as being poured out upon his people, Prov. i. 23; Isa. xlv. 3; Joel ii. 28, 29; Acts ii. 17, 18. The baptism of the Holy Spirit is the same, therefore, as the sending of his influences to convert, purify, and guide the soul. 'The Holy Ghost.' The third Person of the adorable Trinity, whose office it is to renew, enlighten, change, and comfort the soul. He was promised by the Saviour to convince of sin, John xvi. 8. To enlighten or teach the disciples, John xiv. 26; xvi. 13. To comfort them in the absence of the Saviour, John xiv. 18; xvi. 7. He changes the heart, Titus iii. 5. To be baptized with the Holy Ghost means that the Messiah would send upon the world a far more powerful and mighty influence than had attended the preaching of John. His ministry would not affect the external life only, but the heart, the motives, the soul; and produce rapid and permanent changes in the lives of men. See Acts ii. 17, 18. 'With fire.' This expression has been very variously understood. Some have supposed that it refers to the afflictions and persecutions with which men would be tried under the gospel; others, that the word 'fire' meant judgment or wrath. A part of his hearers he should baptize with the Holy Ghost, but the wicked with fire and vengeance. Fire is a symbol of vengeance. See Isa. v. 24; lxi. 2; lxvi. 24. The ministry of the Messiah would be very powerful, trying, purifying, searching. Multitudes would be converted; and those who were not true penitents should not be able to abide the trial, and should be driven away.

12. Whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

12. 'His fan.' 'His floor.' The threshing-floor was an open space in the field. It had no covering or walls. It was thirty or forty yards in diameter, and made smooth by rolling it, or treading it hard. A high place was selected for the purpose of keeping it dry, and for the convenience of winnowing the grain by the wind. The grain was usually trodden out by oxen. Sometimes it was beaten with flails, as with us; and sometimes with a sharp

threshing instrument, made to roll over the grain, and to cut the straw at the same time, Isa. xli. 15. After being threshed, it was winnowed. The grain was then separated from the dirt and coarse chaff by a sieve, and then still further cleansed by a fan, an instrument to produce an artificial wind. This method is still practised in eastern nations. 'Shall purge.' Shall cleanse or purify. Shall remove the chaff, &c. 'The garner.' The place to deposit the wheat. 'Unquenchable fire.' Fire that will utterly consume it. By the 'floor,' here, is represented the Jewish people. By the 'wheat,' the righteous, or the people of God. By the 'chaff,' the wicked. They are often represented as being driven away like chaff before the wind, Job xxi. 18; Ps. i. 4; Isa. xvii. 13; Hos. xiii. 13. They are also represented as chaff which the fire consumes, Isa. v. 24. This image is often used to express judgments, Isa. xli. 15. By the unquenchable fire is meant the eternal suffering of the wicked in hell, 2 Thess. i. 8, 9; Mark ix. 48; Matt. xxv. 41.

13 ¶ Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him. 14 But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be baptized of thee, and comest thou to me?

14. It is more fit that I should be baptized with thy baptism, the Holy Ghost, than that thou shouldst be baptized in water by me. I am a sinner, and unworthy to administer this to the Messiah.

15 And Jesus answering, said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him.

15. 'Thus it becometh us.' Though you may feel yourself unworthy, yet it is proper it should be done. 'All righteousness.' Christ chose to give the sanction of his example to the baptism of John. Jesus had no sin. But he was about to enter on his work. It was proper that he should be set apart by his forerunner, and show his connexion with him, and give his approbation to what John had done.

16 And Jesus, when he was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him:

16. 'Straightway.' Immediately. 'The heavens were opened unto him.' This was done while he was praying, Luke iii. 21. If, in the ordinances, we look to God, we may expect he will bless us; the heavens will be opened; light will shine upon our path. The heavens appear to open, or give way. Something of this



kind probably appeared to John at this time. A similar appearance took place at Stephen's death, Acts vii. 56. The expression means, he was permitted to see far into the heavens, beyond what the natural vision would allow. 'Unto him.' It probably refers to John. See John i. 33. It was a testimony given to John that this was the Messiah. 'He saw.' John saw. 'The Spirit of God.' See ver. 11. This was the third Person of the Trinity, descending upon him with somewhat of the hovering motion of a dove, Luke iii. 22. The gift of the Holy Spirit, in this manner, was the public approbation of Jesus, John i. 33, and a sign of his being set apart to the office of the Messiah. He was publicly set apart to his work, and solemnly approved by God in the office to which he was appointed.

17 And lo, a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

17. 'A voice from heaven.' A voice from God. Probably heard by all who were present. This voice, or sound, was repeated on the mount of transfiguration, Matt. xvii. 5; Luke ix. 35, 36; 2 Peter i. 17. It was also heard just before his death, John xii. 28—30. It was a public declaration that Jesus was the Messiah. 'My beloved Son.' This is the title which God himself gave to Jesus. It denotes the nearness of his relation to God, and the love of God for him, Heb. i. 2; it implies that he was equal with God, Heb. i. 5—8; John x. 29—33; xix. 7. 'Am well pleased.' Am ever delighted; and in this solemn and public manner expressed his approbation of him as the long expected Redeemer of the world.

The baptism of Jesus has usually been considered a striking manifestation of the doctrine of the Trinity, or the doctrine that there are three Persons in the Divine nature. 1. There is the person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, baptized in the Jordan, elsewhere declared to be equal with God, John x. 30. 2. The Holy Spirit, descending in a bodily form upon the Saviour. The Holy Spirit is also equal with the Father, or is also God, Acts v. 3, 4. 3. The Father, addressing the Son, and declaring that he was well pleased with him. It is impossible to explain this transaction consistently in any other way than by supposing that there are three equal Persons in the Divine nature, or essence, and that each of these sustains an important part in the work of redeeming men.

In the preaching of John the Baptist we are presented with an example of a faithful minister of God. Neither the wealth, dignity, nor power of his auditors, deterred him from fearlessly declaring the truth respecting their character. He called things by their right names. He did not apologize for their sin. He set it fairly before them, and denounced the appropriate curse. So should all ministers of the gospel. Rank, riches, and power,

should have nothing to do in shaping their ministry. In respectful terms, but without shrinking, all the truths of the gospel must be spoken, or we will follow the ambassador of Christ.

In John we have also an example of humility. Blessed with great success; attended by the great and noble, and with nothing but principle to keep him from turning it to his advantage, he still kept himself out of view, and pointed to a far greater personage at hand. So should every minister of Jesus, however successful, keep the Lamb of God in his eye, and be willing—nay, rejoice to lay all his success and honours at his feet.

Every thing about the work of Jesus was wonderful. He was the equal with God, the Redeemer of men, the mighty God, the Father of eternity, the Prince of peace, Isa. ix. 6, and it was proper that a voice from heaven should declare it, that the angels should attend him, and the Holy Spirit signalize his baptism by his personal presence. And it is proper that we, for whom he came, should give to him our undivided affections, our time, and influence, and hearts, and lives.

## CHAPTER IV.

**1** THEN was Jesus led up of the Spirit into the wilderness, to be tempted of the devil.

1. 'The wilderness.' See Matt. iii. 1. 'The Spirit.' Luke says, ch. iv. 1, that Jesus was full of the Holy Ghost. It was by his influence, therefore, that Christ went into the desert. 'To be tempted.' The word to tempt, in the original, means to try, to endeavour, to attempt to do a thing; then, to try the nature of a thing, as metals by fire; then, to test moral qualities by trying them, to see how they will endure; then, to endeavour to draw men away from virtue by suggesting motives to evil. This is the meaning here, and this is now the established meaning of the word in the English language. 'The devil.' This name is given in the scriptures, by way of eminence, to the leader of evil angels; he is characterised as full of subtilty, envy, art, and hatred of mankind. He is known, also, by the name Satan, Job i. 6—12; Matt. xii. 26. Beelzebub, Matt. xii. 24. The old serpent, Rev. xii. 9. And the prince of the power of the air, Eph. ii. 2.

**2** And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward an hungered.

2. 'Had fasted.' Abstained from food. 'Forty days and nights.' It has been questioned by some whether Christ abstained wholly from food, or only from bread and the food to which he was accustomed. Luke says, ch. iv. 2, that he ate nothing. This settles the question. Mark says, ch. i. 13, that angels came

and ministered unto him. That was done at the close of the forty days. There are other instances of persons fasting forty days, recorded in the scriptures. Moses, Exod. xxxiv. 28. Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 8. In these cases they were, no doubt, miraculously supported.

3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread.

3. 'The tempter.' The devil, or Satan. See ver. 1. 'If thou be the Son of God.' If thou art the Messiah—if God's own Son—then thou hast power to work a miracle, and here is a fit opportunity to try thy power, and show that thou art truly his Son. 'Command that these stones,' &c. The stones that were lying around him in the wilderness. No temptation could have been more plausible, or more likely to succeed, than this. He had just been declared to be the Son of God, ch. iii. 17, and here was an opportunity to show that he was really so. The circumstances were such as to make it appear plausible and proper to work this miracle. 'Here you are,' was the language of Satan, 'hungry, cast out, alone, needy, poor, and yet the Son of God! If you have this power, how easy could you satisfy your wants! How foolish is it, then, for the Son of God, having all power, to be starving in this manner, when by a word he could show his power, and relieve his wants!'

4 But he answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.

4. In reply to this artful temptation, Christ answered by a quotation from the Old Testament, Deut. viii. 3. In that passage the discourse is respecting manna. Moses says that the Lord humbled the people, and fed them with manna, an unusual kind of food, that they might learn that man did not live by bread only, but that there were other things to support life, and that every thing which God had commanded was proper for this. The term 'word,' used in this place, means very often, in Hebrew, thing, and in this place has clearly that meaning. The substance of his answer, then, is—'It is not so imperiously necessary that I should have bread, as to make a miracle proper to procure it. Life depends on the will of God. He can support it in other ways, as well as by bread. He has created other things to be eaten, and man may live by every thing that his Maker has commanded.' And from this temptation we may learn, 1. That Satan often takes advantage of our circumstances to tempt us. The poor he often tempts to repine and complain, and to be dishonest to supply their necessities. 2. Satan's temptations are often the strong-

est immediately after we have been remarkably favoured. He often attempts to fill us with pride, and self-conceit, when we have been favoured with peace of mind, or any new view of God, and endeavours to urge us to do something which may bring us low, and lead us to sin. 3. His temptations are plausible. They seem to be only urging us to do what is good and proper. We are not to think, therefore, that because a thing may seem to be good in itself, it is required to be done. Some of his most powerful temptations are when he seems to be urging us to do what shall be for the glory of God. 4. We are to meet the temptations of Satan, as the Saviour did, with the plain positive declarations of scripture. We are to inquire whether the thing is commanded, and whether, therefore, it is right to do it; and must not trust to our own feelings, or even our wishes, in the matter.

5 Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple,

5. 'Taketh him up.' The word means to conduct one; to lead one; to attend or accompany one; or to induce one to go. It is used in many places in the same sense. From these passages it appears that what is meant here is, that Satan conducted Jesus or accompanied him; but not that this was done against the will of Jesus. 'The holy city.' Jerusalem is called 'holy' because the temple was there, and it was the place of their religious solemnities. 'Setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple.' That part of the sacred edifice sometimes called Solomon's porch. The temple was built on the top of mount Moriah. The temple itself, together with the courts and porches, occupied a large space of ground. See note, Matt. xxi. 12. The porch on the south side was, however, sixty-seven feet broad, and one hundred and fifty high. From the top of this to the bottom of the valley below was more than seven hundred feet, and Josephus says that one could scarcely look down without dizziness. It was here, probably, that Christ was placed.

Satan proposed that he should cast himself down thence; and if he was the Son of God, he said it could do no harm. There was a promise that he should be protected. This promise was taken from Ps. xci. 11, 12.

To this passage of scripture Christ replied with another, which forbade the act. This is taken from Deut. vi. 16: 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.' That is, Thou shalt not try him; or, Thou shalt not, by throwing thyself into voluntary uncommanded dangers, appeal to God for protection, or trifle with the promises made to those who are thrown into danger by his providence. It is true, indeed, that God aids those of his people who are placed by him in trial or danger; but it is not true that the promise was meant to extend to those who wantonly provoke him, and trifle with the promised help.



6 And saith unto him, If thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down; for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in *their* hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone. 7 Jesus said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God. 8 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showeth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them.

8. 'An exceeding high mountain.' Probably some elevated place in the vicinity of Jerusalem, on the top of which could be seen no small part of the land of Palestine. So Moses, before he died, went up into mount Nebo, and from it God showed him 'all the land of Gilead unto Dan, and all Naphtali, and the land of Ephraim and Manasseh, and all the land of Judah, unto the utmost sea, and the south, and the plain of the valley of Jericho, the city of palm trees, unto Zoar,' Deut. xxxiv. 1-3. There are mountains from which no small part of the land of Canaan may be seen. 'All the kingdoms of the world.' The kingdoms of Palestine, or the land of Canaan, and those in the immediate vicinity. Judea was divided into three parts, and those parts were called kingdoms. The term 'world' is often used in this limited sense to denote a part, or a large part of the world, particularly the land of Canaan. See Rom. iv. 13, where it means the land of Judah; also Luke ii. 1, and the note on the place. 'The glory of them.' The riches, splendour, towns, cities, mountains, &c., of this beautiful land.

9 And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

9. 'All these things,' &c. All these kingdoms. All these dominions Satan claimed a right to bestow on whom he pleased. They were very wicked; and with no small degree of plausibility, therefore, he asserted his claim to give them away. Satan regarded Christ as the King of the Jews. As the Messiah, he supposed he had come to take possession of all that country. He was poor and unarmed, and without followers or armies. Satan proposed to put him in possession of it at once, without any difficulty, if he would worship him and acknowledge him as the proper lord and disposer of that country; if he would trust to him rather than to God. 'Worship me.' See note on Matt. ii. 2. Render religious homage. We may be surprised at his boldness. But he supposed it was an object dear to the heart of the Messiah to obtain these kingdoms. He claimed a right over them; and he seemed not to be asking too much, if he gave them to Jesus, that Jesus should be willing to acknowledge the gift, and express



gratitude for it. So plausible are Satan's temptations, even when they are blasphemous, and so artfully does he present his allurements to the mind.

10 Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

10. This was a bolder attack than any which had been offered, a more decided and deadly thrust at the piety of the Saviour. It was a proposition that the Son of God should worship the devil, instead of honouring and adoring Him who made heaven and earth; that he should bow down before the prince of wickedness. 'It is written.' In Deut. vi. 13.

11 Then the devil leaveth him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him.

11. 'The devil leaveth him.' The devil left him for a time, Luke iv. 13. He intended to return again to the temptation, and if possible to seduce him yet from God. 'The angels came and ministered.' See ch. i. 20. They came and supplied his wants, and comforted him. From the whole of this we may learn, 1. That no one is so holy as to be free from temptation; for the pure Son of God was sorely tempted by the devil. 2. That when God permits a temptation or trial to come upon us, he will, if we look to him, give us grace to resist and overcome it, 1 Cor. x. 13. 3. We see the art of the tempter. His temptations are adapted to times and circumstances. What could have been more plausible than his suggestions to Christ? They were applicable to his circumstances. They had the appearance of much piety. They were backed by passages of scripture—misapplied, but still most artfully presented. He never comes boldly and tempts men to sin, telling them that they are committing sin. Such a mode would defeat his design. It would put people on their guard. He commences, therefore, artfully, plausibly, and the real purpose does not appear till he has prepared the mind for it. This is the way with all temptation. No wicked man would at once tempt another to be profane, to be drunk, to be an infidel, or to commit adultery. The principles are first corrupted. The confidence is secured. The affections are won. And then the allurements are by little and little presented, till the victim falls. How should every one be on his guard at the very first appearance of evil, at the first suggestion that may possibly lead to evil! 4. One of the best ways of meeting temptation is by applying scripture. So our Saviour did; and they will always best succeed who best wield the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, Eph. vi. 17.

12 ¶ Now, when Jesus had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee;

12. For an account of the imprisonment of John, see Matt. xiv. 1—12. 'He departed into Galilee.' See Matt. ii. 22. The reasons why Jesus went then into Galilee were, probably, 1. Because the attention of the people had been much excited by John's preaching, and it was more favourable for his own ministry. 2. It seemed desirable to have some one to second John in the work of reformation. 3. It was less dangerous for him to commence his labours there than near Jerusalem.

13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea-coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim ;

13. 'Leaving Nazareth.' Because his townsmen cast him out, and rejected him. See Luke iv. 14—30. 'Came and dwelt in Capernaum.' This was a city on the sea of Tiberias. It is not mentioned in the Old Testament, but is repeatedly in the gospels.

In this place, and its neighbourhood, Jesus spent no small part of the three years of his public ministry. It is hence called his own city, Matt. ix. 1. In the time of Christ this was a large and flourishing city. It is now in ruins. 'Upon the sea-coast,' The sea of Tiberias. 'In the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim.' Two tribes of the children of Israel located in this part of the land of Canaan. Compare Gen. xlix. 13. Joshua xix. 10. 32.

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles :

14, 15. 'That it might be fulfilled,' &c. This place is recorded in Isa. ix. 1, 2. Matthew has given the sense, but not the very words of the prophet. 'Beyond Jordan.' This does not mean to the east of Jordan, as the phrase sometimes denotes, but rather in the vicinity of the Jordan, or perhaps in the vicinity of the sources of the Jordan. See Deut. i. 1 ; iv. 49. 'Galilee of the Gentiles.' Galilee was divided into upper and lower Galilee. Upper Galilee was called Galilee of the Gentiles, because it was occupied chiefly by Gentiles. It was in the neighbourhood of Tyre, Sidon, &c. The word Gentiles includes in the scriptures all who are not Jews.

16 The people which sat in darkness, saw great light ; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death, light is sprung up.

16. 'The people which sat in darkness.' Those who are ignorant of God, and their duty, are said to be in darkness. As ignorance is often connected with crime and vice, so darkness is sometimes used to denote sin, 1 Thess. v. 5 ; Eph. v. 8 ; Luke

xxii. 53. 'The region and shadow of death.' This is a forcible and beautiful image, designed also to denote ignorance and sin. It is often used in the bible, and is very expressive. It denotes a dismal, gloomy, and dreadful shade, where death and sin reign, like the chills, damps, and horrors of the dwelling-place of the dead. See Job x. 21; xvi. 16; xxxiv. 22; Ps. xxiii. 4; Jer. ii. 6. These expressions indicate that the country of Galilee was peculiarly ignorant and blind. We know that the people were proverbially so. They were distinguished for a coarse, outlandish manner of speech, Mark xiv. 70; and a general profligacy of morals and manners. It shows the great compassion of the Saviour, that he went to preach to such poor and despised sinners. Instead of seeking the rich and the learned, he chose to minister to the needy, the ignorant, and the contemned. In doing this, Jesus set an example for all his followers. It is their duty to seek out those who are sitting in the shadow of death, and to send the gospel to them.

17 ¶ From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

17. See Matt. iii. 2.

18 ¶ And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea; for they were fishers.

18. 'Sea of Galilee.' This was also called the sea of Tiberias, and the lake of Gennesareth, and also the sea of Chinnereth, Num. xxxiv. 11; Deut. iii. 17; Josh. xii. 3. It is about fifteen miles in length, and from six to nine in width. Many populous cities once stood on its shores, such as Tiberias, Bethsaida, Capernaum, Chorazin, Hippos, &c. The shores are described by Josephus as a perfect paradise, producing every luxury under heaven, at all seasons of the year. The waters of the lake are sweet and pleasant to the taste, and clear. The lake still abounds with fish, and gives employment, as it did in the time of our Saviour, to those who live on its shores. It is, however, stormy, owing to the high hills by which it is surrounded. 'Simon called Peter.' The name Peter means a rock, and is the same as Cephas. See note, Matt. xvi. 18; also John i. 42; 1 Cor. xv. 5.

19 And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

19. 'Fishers of men.' Ministers or preachers of the gospel, whose business it shall be to win souls to Christ.

20 And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed him.

20. 'Straightway.' Immediately—as all should do when the Lord Jesus calls them. 'Left their nets.' Their nets were the means of their living, perhaps all their property. By leaving them immediately, and following him, they gave every evidence of sincerity. They showed that they were willing to forsake all for the sake of Jesus, and to follow him wherever he should lead them. So we should cheerfully go, when our Saviour calls, willing to commit all into his hands. 'Followed him.' This is an expression denoting that they became his disciples.

21 And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James *the son of* Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets: and he called them. 22 And they immediately left the ship, and their father, and followed him.

22. This showed how willing they were to follow Jesus. If necessary, we should leave father, and mother, and every friend, Luke xiv. 26. If they will go with us, and be christians, it is well; if not, yet they should not hinder us. We should be the followers of Jesus. And while, in doing it, we should treat our friends tenderly and kindly, yet we ought at all hazards to obey God, and do our duty to him.

We see here, too, what humble instruments God makes use of to convert men. He chose fishermen to convert the world. He chooses the foolish to confound the wise. And it shows that religion is true, and is the power of God, when he makes use of such instruments to change the hearts of men, and save their souls.

23 ¶ And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease among the people.

23. 'All Galilee.' See ch. ii. 22. 'Synagogues.' Places of worship, or places where the people assembled together to worship God. The sacrifices of the Jews were appointed to be held in one place, at Jerusalem. But there was nothing to forbid the other services of religion to be performed at any place.

The synagogues were built in elevated places; in any place where ten men were found who were willing to associate for the purpose; and were the regular, customary places of worship. In them the law, i. e., the Old Testament, divided into suitable portions, was read, prayers were offered, and the scriptures were expounded. The law was so divided, that the five books of Moses, and portions of the prophets, could be read through each year. The scriptures after being read were expounded. This was done either by the officers of the synagogues, or by persons invited to by the officiating minister. Our Saviour and the apostles were



in the habit of attending at those places constantly, and of speaking to the people, Luke iv. 15—22; Acts xiii. 14, 15.

The synagogues were built in imitation of the temple, with a centre building, supported by pillars, and a court surrounding it. See note Matt. xxi. 12. In the centre building, or chapel, was a place prepared for the reading of the law, or a prophet. The law was kept in a chest, or ark, near to the pulpit. The uppermost seats, Matt. xxiii. 6, were those nearest to the pulpit. The people sat round, facing the pulpit. When the law was read, the officiating person rose; when it was expounded, he was seated, Matt. v. 1; xiii. 1. 'The gospel of the kingdom.' The good news respecting the kingdom which he was about to set up; or the good news respecting the coming of the Messiah, and the nature of his kingdom. 'All manner of sickness.' All kinds of sickness.

24 And his fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy: and he healed them.

24. Syria was the general name for the country lying between the Euphrates on the east, the Mediterranean on the west, mount Taurus on the north, and Arabia on the south. 'Those possessed with devils.' Persons under the influence of evil spirits, who had complete possession of the faculties; and produced many symptoms of disease not unlike melancholy, and madness, and epilepsy. Christ and the apostles spoke to them, and of them, as such; they addressed them, and managed them precisely as if they were so possessed, leaving their hearers to infer beyond a doubt that such was their real opinion. They spake, conversed, asked questions, gave answers, and expressed their knowledge of Christ, and their fear of him, Matt. viii. 28. Luke viii. 27. They are represented as going out of the persons possessed, and entering the bodies of others, Matt. viii. 32. Jesus threatened them, commanded them to be silent, to depart, and not to return, Mark i. 25; v. 8; ix. 25. This could not be said of diseases. Nor is there any absurdity in the opinion that those persons were really under the influence of devils. It is no more absurd to suppose that an angel, or many angels, should have fallen and become wicked, than that so many men should. It afforded an opportunity for Christ to show his power over the enemies of himself and of man, and thus to evince himself qualified to meet every enemy of the race, and triumphantly to redeem his people. He came to destroy the power of Satan, Acts xxvi. 18. Rom. xvi. 20. 'Those that were lunatic.' This name is given to the disease from the Latin name of the moon. (Luna.) It has the same origin in Greek. It was given, because it was formerly imagined that



it was affected by the increase or decrease of the moon. It is mentioned only in this place, and in Matt. xvii. 15. It was probably the falling sickness, or the epilepsy, the same as the disease mentioned Mark ix. 18—20. Luke ix. 39, 40. 'And those that had the palsy.' Several infirmities were included under this general name of palsy, in the New Testament. 1. The apoplexy, or paralytic shock, affecting the whole body. 2. The hemiplegy, affecting only one side of the body; the most frequent form of the disease. 3. The paraplegy, affecting all the system below the neck. 4. The catalepsy. This is caused by a contraction of the muscles in the whole or a part of the body, and is very dangerous. The effects are very violent and fatal. For instance, if, when a person is struck, he happens to have his hand extended, he is unable to draw it back; if not extended, he is unable to stretch it out. It appears diminished in size, and dried up in appearance. Hence it was called the withered hand, Matt. xii. 10—13. 5. The cramp. This, in eastern countries, is a fearful malady, and by no means unfrequent. It originates from chills in the night. The limbs, when seized with it, remain unmovable, and the person afflicted with it resembles one undergoing a torture. This was probably the disease of the servant of the centurion, Matt. viii. 6. Luke vii. 2. Death follows from this disease in a few days. 'And he healed them.' This was done evidently by a miraculous power. A miracle is an effect produced by Divine power above, or opposed to, what are regular effects of the laws of nature. It is not a violation of the laws of nature, but is a suspension of their usual operation, for some important purpose. For instance, the regular effect of death is that the body returns to corruption. This effect is produced by the appointed laws of nature; or, in other words, God usually produces this effect. When he suspends that regular effect, and gives life to a dead body for some important purpose, it is a miracle. Such an effect is clearly the result of Divine power. No other being but God can do it. When, therefore, Christ and the apostles exerted this power, it was clear evidence that God approved of their doctrines; that he had commissioned them; and that they were authorized to declare his will. He would not give this attestation to a false doctrine. Most or all of these diseases were incurable. When Christ cured them by a word, it was the clearest of all proofs that he was sent from heaven. This is one of the strong arguments for christianity.

25 And there followed him great multitudes of people *from* Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

25. Decapolis was the name of a region of country in the bounds of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the east of Jordan,

It was so called because it included ten cities, the meaning of the word Decapolis in Greek.

## CHAPTER V.

1 AND seeing the multitudes, he went up into a mountain: and when he was set, his disciples came unto him.

1. 'Seeing the multitudes.' The great numbers that came to attend on his ministry. It is commonly called the sermon on the mount. It is not improbable that it was repeated, in substance, on different occasions, and to different people. See note, Luke vi. 17—20. 'Went up into a mountain.' It was more convenient to address the multitude from an eminence, than on the same level with them. 'And when he was set.' This was the common mode of teaching among the Jews. 'His disciples came.' The word disciples means learners, those who are taught. Here it is put for those who attended on the ministry of Jesus, and does not imply that they were all christians. See John vi. 66.

2 And he opened his mouth, and taught them, saying, 3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

3. 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' The word 'blessed' means happy. 'Poor in spirit.' To be poor in spirit, is to have a humble opinion of ourselves; to be sensible that we are sinners, and have no righteousness of our own; to be willing to be saved only by the rich grace and mercy of God; to be willing to be where God places us, to bear what he lays on us, to go where he bids us, and to die when he commands; to be willing to be in his hands, and to feel that we deserve no favour from him. It is opposed to pride, and vanity, and ambition. Such are happy: 1. Because there is more real enjoyment in thinking of ourselves as we are, than in being filled with pride, and vanity, and vexation. 2. Because such Jesus chooses to bless, and on them he confers his favours here. 3. Because theirs will be the kingdom of heaven hereafter.

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

4. 'Blessed are they that mourn.' Those who mourn over sin are blessed. The gospel only can give true comfort to those in affliction, Isa. lxi. 1—3. Other sources of consolation may blunt the sensibilities of the mind; may produce a sullen and reluctant submission to what we cannot help; but they do not point to the true source of comfort. In the God of mercy only; in the

Saviour; in the peace that flows from the hope of a better world; there, and there only is comfort, 2 Cor. iii. 17, 18; v. 1. Those who mourn thus shall be comforted. So those who grieve over sin; who sorrow that they have committed it, and that they have offended God, shall find comfort in the gospel. Through the merciful Saviour those sins may be forgiven; and in him the weary and heavy-laden soul shall find peace, Matt. xi. 28—30; and the presence of the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, shall sustain us here, John xiv. 26, 27, and all tears shall be wiped away in heaven, Rev. xxi. 4.

5 Blessed *are* the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

5. 'The meek.' Meekness is the patient reception of injuries with a belief that God will vindicate us. 'Vengeance is his; he will repay,' Rom. xii. 19. It little becomes us to take his place, and to do what he has a right to do, and what he has promised to do. Meekness produces peace. He that is constantly ruffled, that suffers every little insult or injury to throw him off his guard, and raise a storm of passion within, is at the mercy of every mortal that chooses to disturb him. He is like the troubled sea that cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. 'They shall inherit the earth.' This might have been translated 'the land.' The Jews were in the constant habit of using the Old Testament, where this promise perpetually occurs, and they used it to denote any great blessing, perhaps as the sum of all blessings, Psa. xxxvii. 22. Isa. lx. 21. Our Saviour used it in this sense. They also considered the land of Canaan as a type of heaven, and of the blessings under the Messiah. To inherit 'the land' became, therefore, an expression denoting those blessings. When our Saviour promises it here, he means that the meek shall be received into his kingdom, and partake of its blessings here, and of the glories of the heavenly Canaan hereafter. The value of meekness, even in regard to worldly property and success in life, is often exhibited in the scriptures, Prov. xxii. 24, 25; xv. 1; xxv. 8, 15. It is also seen in common life that a meek, patient, mild man is the most happy. An impatient and quarrelsome man raises up enemies; often loses property in lawsuits; spends his time in disputes, rather than in sober, honest industry; and is harassed, vexed, and unsuccessful in all that he does. See 1 Tim. iv. 8; vi. 3—6.

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

6. Hunger and thirst, here, are expressive of strong desire. No wants are so keen, none so imperiously demand supply, as these. They occur daily; and when long continued, nothing is more distressing. An ardent desire for any thing is often

represented in the scriptures by hunger and thirst, Psa. xlii. 1, 2; lxiii. 1, 2. A desire for the blessings of pardon and peace; a deep sense of sin, and want, and wretchedness, is also represented by thirsting, Isa. lv. 1, 2. So those that, in like manner, are perishing for want of righteousness, that feel that they are lost sinners, and strongly desire to be holy, shall be filled. Never was there a desire to be holy, which God was not willing to gratify. See Isa. lv. 1. John iv. 14; vi. 35; vii. 37, 38. Psa. xvii. 15.

7 *Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.*

'Blessed are the merciful.' That is, those who are so affected by the sufferings of others, as to be disposed to alleviate them. This is given as an evidence of piety, and it is said that they who show mercy to others, shall obtain it. The same sentiment is found in Matt. x. 42. See also Matt. xxv. 34—40. It should be done to glorify God; that is, in obedience to his commandments, with a desire that he should be honoured; and feeling that we are benefiting one of his creatures. Then he will regard it as done to him, and will reward us, Ps. xviii. 25, 26.

We cannot imitate God more than in showing mercy. He proclaimed himself gracious and long-suffering, Exod. xxxiv. 6. To us, guilty sinners, exposed to eternal woe, he has shown his mercy by giving his Son to die for us; by expressing his willingness to pardon and save us; and by sending his Spirit to renew and sanctify the heart. Each day of our life, each hour, and each moment, we partake of his undeserved mercy. All the blessings we enjoy are proofs of his mercy. If we, also, show mercy to the poor, the wretched, the guilty, it shows that we are like God. We have his spirit, and shall not lose our reward. And we have abundant opportunity to do it. Our world is full of guilt, and of woes, which we may help to relieve; and every day of our lives we have opportunity, by helping the poor and wretched, and by forgiving those who injure us, to show that we are like God. See note on chap. vi. 14, 15.

8 *Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.*

Those whose minds and principles are pure. Who seek not only to have the external actions correct, but who desire to be holy in heart, and who are so. Man looks on the outward appearance, but God looketh on the heart. 'They shall see God.' This is spoken of as a peculiar favour. So also in Rev. xxii. 4. To see the face of one, or to be in his presence, were, among the Jews, terms expressive of great favour, Prov. xxii. 29. 2 Kings xxv. 19. So here, to see God, means to be his friends and favourites, and to dwell with him in his kingdom.



9 Blessed *are* the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

The peace-makers are those who zealously strive to prevent contention, and strife, and war. Who use their influence to reconcile opposing parties, and to prevent lawsuits, and hostilities, in families and neighbourhoods. Every man may do something of this kind; and no man is more like God than he who does it. And it should be taken in hand in the beginning. 'The beginning of strife,' says Solomon, 'is like the letting out of water.' 'An ounce of prevention,' says the English proverb, 'is worth a pound of cure.' 'Children of God.' Those who resemble God, or who manifest a spirit like his. He is the Author of peace, 1 Cor. xiv. 33; and all those who endeavour to promote peace are like him, and are worthy to be called his children.

10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Persecuted.' To persecute means to vex, afflict, or oppress on account of religion. They persecute others who injure their names, reputation, property, or endanger or take their life, on account of their religious opinions. 'For righteousness' sake.' Because they are righteous. We are not to seek persecution. We are not to provoke it by violating the laws of civil society, or by modes of speech unnecessarily offensive to others. But if, in the honest effort to be christians, and to live the life of christians, others persecute and revile us, we are to consider this as a blessing, 2 Tim. iii. 12. 'Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.' They have evidence that they are christians, and shall be brought to heaven.

11 Blessed *are* ye when *men* shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.

'Revile you.' Reproach you; call you by evil and contemptuous names; ridicule you because you are christians. Thus they said of Jesus, that he was a Samaritan and had a devil; that he was mad. But, being reviled, he reviled not again, 1 Pet. ii. 23; and thus being reviled, we should bless, 1 Cor. iv. 12; and thus, though the contempt of the world is not in itself desirable, yet it is blessed to tread in the footsteps of Jesus, to imitate his example, and even to suffer for his sake, Phil. i. 29. 'All manner of evil—falsely.' An emphasis should be laid on the word *falsely* in this passage. It is not blessed to have evil spoken of us if we deserve it; but if we deserve it not, then we should not consider it as a calamity, 1 Pet. iii. 13—18. 'For my sake.' Because you are attached to me; because you are christians. If, in the faithful endeavour to be christians, we are reviled, as our



Master was, then we are to take it with patience, and to remember that thousands before us have been treated in like manner.—When thus reviled, or persecuted, we are to be meek, patient, humble; not angry; not reviling again; but endeavouring to do good to our persecutors and slanderers, 2 Tim. ii. 24, 25. In this way many have been convinced of the power and excellence of that religion which they were persecuting and reviling.

12 Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in heaven; for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

'Rejoice,' &c. The reward of such suffering is great; hence many of the early christians literally rejoiced, and leaped for joy, at the prospect of death for the sake of Jesus. Nothing but the consciousness of innocence, and the presence of God, could have borne them up in the midst of these trials. 'The prophets,' &c. The holy men who came to predict future events, and who were the religious teachers of the Jews. For an account of their persecutions, see the 11th chapter of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

13 ¶ Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

'Ye are the salt of the earth.' Salt renders food pleasant and palatable, and preserves from putrefaction. So christians, by their lives and instructions, are to keep the world from entire moral corruption. By bringing down, by their prayers, the blessing of God, they save the world from universal vice and crime. 'Salt have lost his savour.' That is, if it have become insipid, tasteless, or have lost its preserving properties. In eastern countries the salt used was impure, mingled with vegetable and earthy substances; so that it might lose the whole of its saltness, and a considerable quantity remain. This was good for nothing except that it was used, as it is said, to place in paths, or walks, as we use gravel.

14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.

'The light of the world.' The term light is often applied to religious teachers. See Matt. iv. 16. Luke ii. 32. John i. 4; viii. 12. Isa. xlix. 6. It is pre-eminently applied to Jesus, because he is in the moral world, what the sun is in the natural world. The apostles, and christian ministers, and all christians, are lights of the world, because they, by their instructions and examples, show what God requires, what is the condition of man, what is the way of duty, peace, and happiness—the way that

leads to heaven. 'A city that is set on a hill,' &c. Many of the cities of Judea were placed on the summits or sides of mountains, and could be seen from afar. Perhaps Jesus pointed to such a city, and told his disciples that they were like it. They were seen from afar. Their actions could not be hid. The eyes of the world were upon them. They must be seen; and as this was the case, they ought to be holy, harmless, and undefiled.

15 Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

'Neither do men light a candle,' &c. When men light a candle, they do not conceal the light, but place it where it may be of use. So it is with religion. It is given that we may benefit others. It is not to be concealed, but suffered to show itself, and to shed light on a surrounding wicked world. 'A bushel.' A measure, containing about a peck. Here it denotes any thing that might conceal the light.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

'Let your light so shine,' &c. Let your holy life, your pure conversation, and your faithful instruction, be every where seen and known. 'That they may see your good works.' It is not right to do a thing merely to be seen by others, for this is pride and ostentation; but we are to do it, that, being seen, God may be honoured. 'Glorify your Father.' Praise or honour God, be led to worship him. That seeing in your lives the excellence of religion, the power and purity of the gospel, they may be won to be christians also, and give praise and glory to God for his mercy to a lost world.

We learn here, 1. That religion, if it exist, cannot be concealed. 2. That where it is not manifest in the life, it does not exist. 3. That professors of religion, who live like other men, give evidence that they have never been renewed. 4. That to attempt to conceal or hide our christian knowledge or experience is to betray our trust, and injure the cause of piety, and render our lives useless. And, 5. That good actions will be seen, and will lead men to honour God. If we have no other way of doing good, if we are poor and unlearned, and unknown, yet we may do good by our lives. No sincere and humble christian lives in vain.

17 ¶ Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil.

'Think not that I am come,' &c. Our Saviour was just entering on his work. It was important for him to state what he came to do. By his setting up to be a teacher in opposition to the

scribes and pharisees, some might charge him with an intention of destroying their law, and abolishing the customs of the nation. He therefore told them that he did not come for that end, but really 'to fulfil' or accomplish what was in the law and the prophets. 'To destroy.' To abrogate; to deny their obligation; to set men free from the obligation to obey them. 'The law.' The five books of Moses, called the law. See note on Luke xxiv. 44. 'The prophets.' The books which the prophets wrote. These two divisions comprehend the Old Testament, and Jesus says that he came not to do away or destroy the authority of the Old Testament. 'But to fulfil.' To complete the design; to fill up what was predicted, to accomplish what was intended in them. The word 'fulfil,' also means sometimes to teach or inculcate, Col. i. 25. The law of Moses directed many sacrifices and rites which were designed to shadow forth the Messiah, Heb. ix. These were fulfilled when he came and offered himself a sacrifice to God; a sacrifice of nobler name and richer blood than they. The prophets contained many predictions respecting his coming and death. These were all to be fulfilled and fully accomplished by his miracles, and his sufferings.

18 For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

'Verily.' Truly, certainly. A word of strong affirmation. 'Till heaven and earth pass.' It is the same as saying, every thing else may change, the very earth and heaven may pass away and be destroyed, but the law of God shall not be destroyed till its whole design shall be accomplished. 'One jot.' The word 'jot' is the name of the Hebrew letter I, the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet. 'One tittle.' The Hebrew letters were written with small points or apices, which serve to distinguish one letter from another. To change a small point of one letter might vary the meaning of a word, and destroy the sense. Hence the Jews were exceedingly cautious in writing these letters. The expression, 'one jot or tittle,' became proverbial, and means that the smallest part of the law shall not be destroyed.

The laws of the Jews are divided into moral, ceremonial, and judicial. The moral laws are such as grow out of the nature of things, which cannot, therefore, be changed, such as the duty of loving God and his creatures. These cannot be abolished, as it can never be made right to hate God, or to hate our fellow-men. Of this kind are the ten commandments; and these our Saviour has neither abolished nor superseded. The ceremonial laws are such as are appointed to certain states of society, or to regulate the religious rites and ceremonies of a people. These can be changed when circumstances are changed, and yet the moral law be untouched. That law, requiring love and obedience to God,

and love to men, could not be changed, and Christ did not attempt it, Matt. xix. 16—19; xxii. 37—39. Rom. xiii. 9. The judicial law regulated the courts of justice of the Jews. When the form of the Jewish polity was changed, this was of course no longer binding. The ceremonial law was fulfilled by the coming of Christ; the shadow was lost in the substance, and ceased to be binding. The moral law was confirmed and unchanged.

19 Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

'Shall break.' Shall disobey. 'These least commandments Christ teaches that in his kingdom those who taught that any laws of God might be violated with impunity, should be called 'least;' while they should be held in high regard who observed all the laws of God without distinction. 'Shall be called least.' That is, shall be least. See ver. 9. The pharisees divided the law into greater and lesser precepts. They made no small part of it void by their traditions and divisions, Matt. xxiii. 23; xv. 3—9. Jesus says that in his kingdom all this vain division and tradition should cease. Such divisions and distinctions should be a small matter. He that attempted it should be the least of all. 'Shall be called great.' He who teaches that all the moral law of God is binding, and that all of it should be obeyed, without attempting to describe any part as unimportant, shall be a teacher worthy of his office, shall teach the truth, and shall be called great. We learn hence, that all the commands of God should be preached, in their proper place, by christian ministers; that they who pretend that there are any laws of God so small that they need not obey them, are unworthy of his kingdom; and that true piety has respect to all the commandments of God, and keeps them, *Psa. cxix. 6.*

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.

'Your righteousness.' Your holiness, your views of the nature of righteousness, and your conduct and lives. Unless you are more holy than they are, you cannot be saved. 'Shall exceed.' Shall excel or abound more. This righteousness was external, and was not real holiness. The righteousness of true christians is seated in the heart, and is therefore genuine. 'The righteousness of the scribes and pharisees.' See note on ch. iii. 7. Their righteousness consisted in outward observances of the



ceremonial and traditional law. See Matt. xxiii. 13—33. The righteousness that Jesus required in his kingdom was purity, peace, chastity, honesty, temperance, the fear of God, and the love of man. It is pure, internal, reaching the motives, and making the life holy.

21 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment:

‘Ye have heard.’ Or, this is the common interpretation among the Jews. Jesus proceeds here to comment on some prevailing opinions among the Jews; to show that the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees was defective; and that men needed a better righteousness, or they could not be saved. ‘By them of old time.’ Jesus here refers to the interpreters of the law and the prophets. Jesus did not set himself against the law of Moses, but against the false and pernicious interpretations of his law prevalent in his time. ‘Thou shalt not kill.’ See Ex. xx. 13. This literally denotes taking the life of another, with malice, with intention to murder him. The Jews understood it as meaning no more. The comment of our Saviour shows that it was spiritual, and was designed to extend to the thoughts and feelings, as well as the external act. ‘Shall be in danger of.’ Shall be held guilty, and be punished by. The law of Moses declared that the murderer should be put to death, Lev. xxiv. 21. Num. xxxv. 16. ‘The judgment.’ This was the tribunal that had cognizance of cases of murder, &c. It was a court that sat in each city or town, and consisted commonly of seven members.

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause, shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.

‘But I say unto you.’ Jesus being God as well as man, John i. 1, and, therefore, being the original giver of the law, had a right to expound it, or change it as he pleased. He therefore spoke here and elsewhere as having authority, and not as the scribes. He did it as having a right to do it; and he that has a right to ordain and change laws in the government of God must be himself Divine. ‘Is angry—without a cause.’ Anger is a natural feeling, given to us: 1. As an expression of our disapprobation of a course of evil conduct; and, 2. That we may defend ourselves when we are suddenly attacked. When excited against sin it is lawful. See Mark iii. 5. Eph. iv. 26. This anger, or indignation against sin, is not what our Saviour speaks of here. That is anger without a cause; that is, unjustly, rashly,



hastily, where no offence had been given or intended. In that case it is evil; and it is a violation of the sixth commandment, because he that hateth his brother is a murderer, 1 John iii. 15. He has a feeling which would lead him to commit murder if it were fully acted out. 'His brother.' As all men are descended from one Father, and are all the creatures of the same God, so they are all brethren; and so every man should be regarded and treated as a brother. 'Raca.' This is a Syriac word, expressive of great contempt. It comes from a verb signifying to be empty, vain; and hence, as a word of contempt, denotes senseless, stupid. Jesus teaches us here that to use such words is a violation of the sixth commandment. It is a violation of the spirit of that commandment, and, if indulged, may lead to more open and dreadful infractions of that law. Children should learn that to use such words is highly offensive to God, for we must give an account of every idle word which we speak in the day of judgment. 'In danger of the council.' The word translated 'council,' is in the original 'Sanhedrim,' and there can be no doubt that Christ refers to the Jewish tribunal of that name. This was instituted in the time of the Maccabees, probably about 200 years before Christ. It was composed of seventy-two judges; the high-priest was the president of this tribunal. The seventy-two members were made up of the chief priests and elders of the people, and the scribes. This tribunal had cognizance of the great affairs of the nation. Till the time when Judea was subjected to the Romans, it had the power of life and death. 'Thou fool.' This term expressed more than want of wisdom. It was expressive of the highest guilt. It had been commonly used to denote those who were idolaters, or were guilty of great crimes, Josh. vii. 15. Psal. xiv. 1. 'Hell-fire.' The original of this is 'the Gehenna of fire.' The word 'gehenna,' commonly translated hell, is made up of two Hebrew words, and signifies the 'valley of Hinnom.' It was formerly a pleasant valley, near to Jerusalem on the east. This valley the idolatrous Israelites devoted to the horrid worship of Moloch, 2 Kings xvi. 3. 2 Chron. xxviii. 3. There they offered children to Moloch.

After the return of the Jews from captivity, this was made the place where to throw all the dead carcases and filth of the city; and was not unfrequently the place of executions. It became, therefore, extremely offensive; the air was polluted; and to preserve it in any manner pure, it was necessary to keep fires continually burning there. The extreme loathsomeness of the place, the corruption of the atmosphere, and the lurid fires blazing by day and by night, made it one of the most appalling and terrific objects with which a Jew was acquainted. It was called 'the Gehenna of fire;' and was the image which our Saviour often employed to denote the future punishment of the wicked.<sup>1</sup>

In this verse it denotes a degree of suffering higher than the

punishment inflicted by the court of seventy, or the sanhedrim. And the whole verse may therefore mean; He that hates his brother without a cause is guilty of a violation of the sixth commandment, and shall be punished with a severity similar to that inflicted by the court of judgment. He that shall suffer his passions to transport him to still greater extravagances, and shall make him an object of derision and contempt, shall be exposed to still severer punishment, corresponding to that which the sanhedrim, or council, inflicts. But he who shall load his brother with odious appellations, and abusive language, shall incur the severest degree of punishment, represented by being burnt alive in the horrid and awful valley of Hinnom.

Not only murder shall be punished by God, but anger and contempt shall be regarded by him as a violation of the law, and punished according to the offence. As these offences were not actually cognizable before the Jewish tribunals, he must mean that they will be punished hereafter. And all these expressions relate to degrees of punishment proportionate to crime, in the future world, the world of justice and of woe.

23 Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee; 24 Leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

'Therefore, if thou bring thy gift to the altar,' &c. The pharisees were intent only on the external act in worship. If a man conformed to the external rites of religion, however much envy, and malice, and secret hatred, he might have, they thought he was doing well. Our Saviour taught a different doctrine. It was of more consequence to have the heart right, than to perform the outward act. If therefore, says he, a man has gone so far as to bring his gift to the very altar, and should remember that any one had any thing against him, it was his duty there to leave his offering, and go and be reconciled. While a difference of this nature existed, his offering could not be acceptable. To obey is better than sacrifice. He that comes to worship his Maker filled with malice, and hatred, and envy, and at war with his brethren, is a hypocritical worshipper, and must meet with God's displeasure. God is not deceived; and he will not be mocked. 'Thy gift.' Thy sacrifice. What thou art about to devote to God as an offering. 'To the altar.' The altar was placed in front of the temple, and was the place on which sacrifices were made. See note on Matt. xxi. 12. To bring a gift to the altar, was expressive of worshipping God, for this is the way in which he was formerly worshipped. 'Thy brother.' Any man especially any fellow-worshipper. 'Hath aught.' Hath

any thing. Is offended, or thinks he has been injured by you in any manner. 'First be reconciled.' This means to settle the difficulty; to make proper acknowledgment, or satisfaction, for the injury. If you have wronged him, make restitution. If you owe him a debt which ought to be paid, pay it. If you have injured his character, confess it, and seek pardon. If he is under an erroneous impression, if your conduct has been such as to lead him to suspect that you have injured him, make an explanation. Do all in your power, and all you ought to do, to have the matter settled. From this we learn the reason why God often does not accept our offerings; and we go empty away from our devotions. We do not do what we ought to others; we cherish improper feelings, or refuse to make proper acknowledgments, and God will not accept such attempts to worship him.

25 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. 26 Verily, I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

'Agree with thine adversary quickly.' This is still an illustration of the sixth commandment. To be in hostility, to go to law, to be litigious, is a violation always, on one side or the other, of the law requiring us to love our neighbour; and our Saviour regards it as a violation of the sixth commandment. While you are in the way with him, says he, that is, while you are going to the court, before the trial, it is your duty, if possible, to come to an agreement. See I Cor. vi. 6, 7. The consequence of not being reconciled, he expresses in the language of courts. He did not mean to say, that this would be literally the way with God; but that His dealings with those who harboured these feelings, and would not be reconciled with their brethren, were represented by the punishment inflicted by human tribunals. 'Thine adversary.' A man that is opposed to us in law. It here means a creditor; a man who has a just claim on us. 'In the way with him.' While you are going before the court. Before the trial comes on. 'The officer.' The executioner; as we should say, the sheriff. 'The uttermost farthing.' The last farthing. All that is due. The farthing was a small coin used in Judea, equal to two mites. It was equal to about three halfpence of our money.

27 ¶ Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: 28 But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already

in his heart. 29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell. 30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast *it* from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

The pharisees had explained the seventh commandment as they had the sixth, as extending only to the external act. Our Saviour assures them that it did not regard the external act merely, but the secrets of the heart, and the movements of the eye; that they who indulged a wanton desire, have already, in the sight of God, violated the commandment. Such was the guilt of David, whose deep and awful crime fully shows the danger of indulging in evil desires, and in the roivings of a wanton eye. See 2 Sam. xi. Ps. li. So exceeding strict and broad is the law of God! And so heinous in his sight are thoughts and feelings, which may be for ever concealed from the world!

'Thy right eye.' The Hebrews, like others, were accustomed to represent the affections of the mind by the members or parts of the body, Rom. vii. 23; vi. 13. Thus the bowels denoted compassion; the heart, affection, feeling, &c.; the reins, understanding, secret purpose. An evil eye denotes sometimes envy, Matt. xx. 15; sometimes an evil passion, or sin in general, Mark vii. 21, 22. In this place, as in 2 Pet. ii. 14, it is used to denote unlawful desire, and inclination. 'Shall offend thee.' The noun from which the verb 'offend,' in the original, is derived, commonly means a stumbling-block, or a stone, placed in the way over which one might fall. It also means a net, or a certain part of a net, against which, if a bird strikes, it springs the net, and is taken. It comes to signify, therefore, any thing by which we fall, or are ensnared; and applied to morals, the verb means to cause to fall, or to allure, into sin. 'Pluck it out,' &c. Christ intended to teach that the dearest objects, if they caused us to sin, were to be abandoned; that by sacrifices and self-denials, we must overcome the evil propensities of our natures, and resist our wanton imaginations. Our Saviour several times repeated this sentiment. See Matt. xviii. 9. Mark ix. 43—47. See also Col. iii. 5. 'One of thy members perish.' It is better to deny yourself the gratification of an evil passion here, however much it may cost you, than to go down to hell for ever.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 32



But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery : and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

'It hath been said,' &c. That is, by Moses, Deut. xxiv. 1, 2. Our Saviour, in Mark x. 1—12, says that this was permitted on account of the hardness of their hearts; but in the beginning it was not so. God made a single pair, and ordained marriage for life. But Moses found the people so much hardened, so long accustomed to the practice of divorce, and so rebellious, that, as a matter of civil appointment, he thought it best not to attempt any change. Our Saviour brought marriage back to its original institution, and declared, that whosoever put away his wife henceforward should be guilty of adultery. Only one offence, he declared, could justify divorce. This is now the law of God. This was the original institution. This is the only law that is productive of peace and good morals, and the due respect of a wife, and the good of children. No earthly laws can trample down the laws of God, or make that right which he hath solemnly pronounced wrong.

33 ¶ Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths :

'Thou shalt not forswear thyself.' Christ here proceeds to correct another false interpretation of the law. The law respecting oaths is found in Lev. xix. 12, and Deut. vi. 13. By those laws men were forbid to perjure themselves or to forswear, that is, swear falsely. 'Perform unto the Lord.' Perform literally, really, and religiously, what is promised in an oath. 'Thine oaths.' An oath is a solemn affirmation, or declaration, made with an appeal to God for the truth of what is affirmed, and imprecating his vengeance, and renouncing his favour, if what is affirmed be false. A false oath is called perjury; or, as in this place, forswearing.

The Jewish rabbins had introduced a number of oaths in common conversation, and oaths which they did by no means consider as binding. So long as they kept from swearing by the name Jehovah, and so long as they observed the oaths publicly taken, they seemed to consider all others as allowable, and allowedly broken. This is the abuse which Christ wished to correct. It was the practice of swearing in common conversation, and especially swearing by created things. To swear by these things, was to treat irreverently objects created by God; and could not be without guilt.

Our Saviour here had no reference to oaths taken in a court of



justice. It was merely the foolish and wicked habit of swearing in private conversation; of swearing on every occasion, and by every thing, that he condemned. This he does condemn in a most unqualified manner. He himself, however, did not refuse to take an oath in a court of law, Matt. xxvi. 63, 64. So Paul often called God to witness his sincerity, which is all that is meant by an oath. See Rom. i. 9; ix. 1. Gal. i. 20. Heb. vi. 16.

34 But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: 35 Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King:

'Swear not at all.' That is, in the manner which he proceeds to specify. Swear not in any of the common and profane ways customary at that time. 'By heaven; for it is God's throne.' To swear by that was, if it meant any thing, to swear by Him that sitteth thereon, Matt. xxiii. 22. 'The earth; it is his footstool.' Swearing by that, therefore, is really swearing by God. A footstool is that on which the feet rest when sitting. The term is applied to the earth, to denote how lowly and humble an object it is when compared with God. 'City of the great King.' That is God; called the great King, because he was the King of the Israelites, and Jerusalem was the capital of the nation, and the place where he was peculiarly honoured as king.

36 Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black.

'Thy head.' To swear by the head was the same as to swear by the life; or to say, I will forfeit my life if what I say is not true. God is the author of the life, and to swear by that, therefore, is the same as to swear by him. 'One hair,' &c. You have no control or right over your own life. You cannot even change one single hair. God has all that control; and it is therefore improper and profane to pledge what is God's gift and God's property; and it is the same as swearing by God himself.

37 But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

'Your communication.' Your word; what you say. 'Be, yea.' Yes. It means that we should simply affirm, or declare that a thing is so. 'More than these.' More than these affirmations. Profane oaths come of evil. 'Cometh of evil.' Is evil. Proceeds from some evil disposition or purpose. And from this we may learn: 1. That profane swearing is always the evidence of a depraved heart. 2. That no man is believed any sooner because he swears to a thing. He that will break the third commandment, will not hesitate to break the ninth also. The max.

who is always believed, is he whose character is beyond suspicion in all things. A man that is truly a christian, and leads a christian life, does not need oaths and profaneness to make him believed. 3. It is no mark of a gentleman to swear. The basest and meanest of mankind swear with as much skill as the most refined; and he that wishes to degrade himself to the very lowest level of pollution and shame, should learn to be a common swearer. Any man has talents enough to learn to curse God, and his fellow-men, and to pray—for every man who swears, prays—that God would sink him and others into hell. 4. Profaneness has done no man any good. It is disgusting to the refined; abominable to the good; insulting to those with whom we associate; degrading to the mind; unprofitable, needless, and injurious, in society; and awful in the sight of God. 5. God will not hold the profane swearer guiltless. Wantonly to profane his name; to call his vengeance down; to curse him on his throne; to invoke damnation; is perhaps of all offences the most awful. And there is not in the universe more cause of amazement at his forbearance, than that God does not rise in vengeance, and smite the profane swearer at once to hell. Verily God is slow to anger; and his mercy is without bounds!

38 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. 39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also. 41 And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

‘An eye for an eye,’ &c. This command is found in Ex. xxi. 24; Lev. xxiv. 20; and Deut. xix. 21. In these places it was given as a rule to regulate the decisions of judges. Christ finds no fault with the rule as applied to magistrates, and does not take upon himself to repeal it. But the Jews made it the rule by which to take private revenge. They considered themselves justified by this rule to inflict the same injury on others that they had received. Against this our Saviour remonstrates.

The general principle which he laid down was, that we are not to resist evil; that is, not to set ourselves against an evil person who is injuring us. But even this general direction is not to be pressed too strictly. Christ did not intend to teach that we are to see our families murdered, or be murdered ourselves, rather than to make resistance. The law of nature, and all laws, human and divine, have justified self-defence, when life is in danger. Our Saviour immediately explains what he means. Had he intended to refer it to a case where life is in danger, he would most surely

have mentioned it. Instead of doing this, however, he confines himself to smaller matters, to things of comparatively trivial interest, and says, that in these we had better take wrong than enter into strife and lawsuits.

'Coat.' The Jews wore two principal garments. The interior, here called the 'coat,' or the tunic, was made commonly of linen, and encircled the whole body, extending down to the knees. The coat, or tunic, was extended to the neck, and had long or short sleeves. Over this was commonly worn an upper garment, here called 'cloak,' or mantle. It was made commonly nearly square, of different sizes, five or six cubits long, and as many broad, wrapped around the body, and thrown off when labour was performed. This was the garment which is said to have been without seam woven throughout, John xix. 23.

'Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile.' The word translated 'shall compel,' is of Persian origin. The king's messengers were permitted to compel any person, or to press any horse, boat, ship, or other vehicle that they might need, for the quick transmission of the king's commandments. It was to this custom that our Saviour refers. Rather, says he, than resist a public authority, requiring your attendance and aid for a certain distance, go with him peaceably twice the distance. 'A mile.' A Roman mile was a thousand paces.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not thou away.

'Give to him that asketh thee.' It is better to give sometimes to an undeserving person, than to turn away one really necessitous. It is good to be in the habit of giving. At the same time, the rule must be interpreted so as to be consistent with our duty to our families, 1 Tim. v. 8, and with other objects of justice and charity. So of a poor and needy friend that wishes to borrow. We are not to turn away, or deny him. This deserves, however, some limitation. It must be done in consistency with other duties.

43 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy:

The command to love our neighbour was a law of God, Lev. xix. 18. That we must, therefore, hate our enemy, was a false inference drawn from it, by the Jews. They supposed that if we loved the one, we must hate the other. They were total strangers to that great peculiar law of religion which requires us to love both. A neighbour is literally one that lives near to us; then, one that is near to us by acts of kindness and friendship. See also Luke x. 36.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you;

'Love your enemies.' It is impossible to love the conduct of a man that curses and reviles us, and injures our person and property, or that violates all the laws of God; but, though we may hate this conduct, we may still wish well to the person; we may pity his madness and folly; we may speak kindly of him, and to him; we may not return evil for evil; we may seek to do him good here, and to promote his eternal welfare hereafter, Rom. xii. 17-20. This is a peculiar law of christianity, and probably the most difficult of all duties to be performed. 'Bless them that curse you.' The word 'bless' here means to speak well of or to. Not to curse again, or to slander, but to speak of those things which we can commend in an enemy; or if there is nothing that we can commend, to say nothing about him. 'Despitefully use you.' The word thus translated, means, wantonly and unjustly to accuse, and to injure in any way. 'Persecute.' See v. 10.

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

'That ye may be the children of your Father.' In doing good to enemies, we resemble God. He makes his sun to rise on the evil and good, and sends rain without distinction, on the just and unjust. So his people should show that they imitate or resemble him, or possess his spirit, by doing good in a similar way.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

'What reward have ye?' The word 'reward' is used in the sense of deserving praise, or reward. If you only love those that love you, you are selfish, you are not disinterested; it is not genuine love for the character, but love of the benefit; and you deserve no commendation. 'The publicans.' The publicans were tax-gatherers. Judea was a province of the Roman empire. The Jews bore this foreign yoke with great impatience, and paid their taxes with great reluctance. Those who were appointed to collect taxes were objects of great detestation. They were often of abandoned characters, oppressive in their exactions, and dissolute in their lives. By the Jews they were associated in character with thieves, and adulterers, and profane and dissolute men.



47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others* ? do not even the publicans so ?

‘And if ye salute your brethren,’ &c. The word ‘salute’ here means to show the customary tokens of civility, or to treat with the common marks of friendship. See note, Luke x. 4. He says the worst men, the very publicans, would do this. Christians should do more; they should show that they had a different spirit; they should treat their enemies as well as wicked men did their friends.

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

‘Be ye therefore perfect.’ This word commonly means finished, complete, pure, holy. Originally it is applied to a machine that is complete in its parts. Applied to men, it refers to completeness of parts, or perfection, where no part is defective or wanting. Thus Job, i. 1, is said to be perfect; that is, not holy as God, or sinless; for fault is afterwards found with him, Job ix. 20; xlii. 6; but his piety was consistent and regular, as a prince, a father, an individual, a benefactor of the poor. He was consistent every where. Be not obedient merely in loving your friends and neighbours, but let your piety be shown in loving your enemies; be perfect; imitate God; let your piety be complete, and proportionate, and regular. This every christian may be; this every christian should be.

## CHAPTER VI.

1 TAKE heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them; otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven.

‘Alms.’ Liberality to the poor and needy. Any thing given to them to supply their wants. It is the nature of religion to help those who are really poor and needy; and a real christian does not wait to be commanded to do it, but only asks the opportunity. See Gal. ii. 10; James i. 27; Luke xix. 8. ‘Before men,’ &c. Our Lord does not forbid us to give alms before men always, but only forbids our doing it to be seen of them, for ostentation, and to seek their praise. To a person who is disposed to do good from a right motive, it matters little whether it be in public or in private. The only thing that renders it even desirable that our good deeds should be seen is, that God may be glorified. See ch. v. 16. ‘Otherwise.’ If your motive for doing it is to be seen of men, God will not reward you.

2 Therefore, when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do, in



the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.

'Do not sound a trumpet before thee as the hypocrites do.' The word 'hypocrite' is taken from stage-players, who act the part of others, or speak not their own sentiments, but the sentiments of others. It means here, and in the New Testament generally, those who dissemble or hide their real sentiments, and assume or express other feelings than their own. Those who, for purposes of ostentation, or gain, or applause, put on the appearance of religion. It is probable that such persons, when about to bestow alms, caused a trumpet to be sounded, professedly to call the poor together to receive it, but really to call the people to notice their alms. 'They have their reward.' That is, they obtain the applause they seek, the reputation of being charitable; and as this applause was all they wished, there is of course no further reward to be looked for or obtained.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth; 4 That thine alms may be in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret, himself shall reward thee openly.

'Let not thy left hand know,' &c. This is a proverbial expression, signifying that the action should be done as secretly as possible. The Hebrews often attribute actions to bodily members which properly belong to persons. See ch. v. 29, 30. The encouragement for doing this is, that it will be pleasing to God; that he will see the act, however secret it may be, and will openly reward it. Rarely, perhaps never, has it been found that the man who is liberal to the poor, has ever suffered by it in his worldly circumstances, Prov. xix. 17.

5 ¶ And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*; for they love to pray standing in the synagogues, and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.

'And when thou prayest,' &c. Hypocrites manifested the same spirit about prayer as alms-giving; it was performed in public places. The Jews were much in the habit of praying in public places. At certain times of the day they always offered their prayers. Wherever they were, they suspended their employment, and paid their devotions. This is also practised now every where by the Mohammedans, and in many places by the Roman Catholics. It seems, also, that they sought publicity, and regarded it as a proof of great piety.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father, which is in secret; and thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

'Enter into thy closet.' Every Jewish house had a place for secret devotion. The roofs of their houses were flat places, for walking, conversation, and meditation, in the cool of the evening. See note, Matt. ix. 2. Over the porch, or entrance of the house, was, however, a small room of the size of the porch, raised a story above the rest of the house, expressly appropriated for the place of retirement. Here, in secrecy and solitude, the pious Jew might offer his prayers, unseen by any but the Searcher of hearts. 'In secret.' Who is unseen. 'Who seeth in secret.' Who sees what the human eye cannot see; who sees the secret real designs and desires of the heart. Prayer should always be offered remembering that God is acquainted with our real desires; and that it is those real desires, and not the words of prayer, that he will answer.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

'Use not vain repetitions.' The original word means to repeat a thing often, to say the same thing in different words, or to repeat the same words, as though God did not hear at first. An example of this we have in 1 Kings xviii. 26.

8 Be not ye, therefore, like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. 9 After this manner, therefore, pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name.

The Lord's prayer is a composition unequalled for comprehensiveness and for beauty. This prayer is given as a model. It is designed to express the manner in which we are to pray, evidently not the precise words or petitions which we are always to use. The substance of the prayer is recorded by Luke, ch. xi. 2—4.

'Our Father.' God is called a Father, as he is the Creator of all; the Proprietor and Preserver of those whom he has made; and in a peculiar sense of those who are adopted into his family, those who put confidence in him, who are true followers of Christ, and made heirs of life, Rom. viii. 14—17. 'Hallowed be thy name.' God's name is essentially holy; and the meaning of this petition is, Let thy name be celebrated, and venerated, and esteemed as holy, every where, and receive of all men proper honours.

10 Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth as *it is* in heaven.

'Thy kingdom come.' The word 'kingdom' here means reign. Note Matt. iii. 2. The petition is the expression of a wish that God may reign every where; that his laws may be obeyed; and especially that the gospel of Christ may be advanced every where, till the world shall be filled with his glory. 'Thy will be done.' The will of God is, that men should obey his law, and be holy. To pray, then, that his will may be done on earth as in heaven, is to pray that his law, his revealed will, may be obeyed and loved. His law is perfectly obeyed in heaven, and his true children most ardently desire and pray that it may also be done on the earth.

The object of these three first petitions is, that God's name should be glorified, and his kingdom established; and by being placed first, we learn that his glory and kingdom are of more consequence than our wants, and that these should be first in our hearts and petitions before a throne of grace.

11 Give us this day our daily bread.

The word 'bread,' here, denotes, doubtless, every thing necessary to sustain life, Matt. iv. 4. Deut. viii. 3. This petition implies our dependence on God for the supply of our wants. As we are dependent on him one day as much as another, it was evidently the intention of our Saviour that prayer should be offered every day. This is, moreover, expressed in the plural number—'Give us.' It is therefore evident that this prayer is a strong implied command for daily family prayer.

12 And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.

We have not met the claims of God's law. We have violated its obligations. We are exposed to its penalty. We are guilty. And God only can forgive in the same way as none but a creditor can forgive a debtor. 'Debts' here, therefore, mean sins, or offences against God—offences which none but God can forgive. The measure by which we may expect forgiveness is that which we use in reference to others. See Ps. xviii. 25, 26. Matt. xviii. 23. Mark xi. 25. This is the invariable rule by which God dispenses pardon. He that comes before him unwilling to forgive, harbouring dark and revengeful thoughts, how can he expect that God will show him that mercy which he is unwilling to show to others? If we cannot from the heart forgive them, we have no reason to expect that God will ever forgive us.

13 And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

'And lead us not into temptation.' A petition similar to this is offered by David, Ps. cxli. 4. God tempts no man. See James i. 13. This phrase, then, must be used in the sense of permitting. Do not suffer us, or permit us, to be tempted to sin. In this it is implied that God has such control over us and the tempter, as to save us from it if we call upon him. 'Deliver us from evil.' The original, in this place, has the article—deliver us from *the* evil; that is, the evil one, or Satan. He is elsewhere called, by way of eminence, the evil one, Matt. xiii. 19. 1 John ii. 13, 14; iii. 12. Deliver us from his power, his snares, his arts, his temptations. He is supposed to be the great parent of evil, and to be delivered from him is to be safe. 'Thine is the kingdom.' That is, Thine is the reign or dominion. Thou hast control over all these things, and canst so order them as to answer these petitions. 'Thine is the power.' Thou hast power to accomplish what we ask. Thou art Almighty, and all things are possible with thee. 'Thine is the glory.' That is, Thine is the honour or praise. Not our honour; but thy glory, thy goodness, will be displayed in providing for our wants; thy power, in defending us; thy praise, in causing thy kingdom to spread through the earth.

This doxology, or ascription of praise, is connected with the prayer by the word 'for,' to signify that all these things—the reign, power, and glory of God—will be manifested by granting these petitions. His glory is, then, the first and principal thing which we are to seek when we approach him. We are to suffer our concerns to be sunk and lost sight of in the superior glory and honour of his name and dominion. We are to seek temporal and eternal life chiefly because the honour of our Maker will be promoted: and his name be more illustriously displayed to his creatures. Approaching him with these feelings, our prayers will be answered, our devotions will rise like incense, and the lifting up our hands will be like the evening sacrifice.

'Amen.' This is a word of Hebrew origin, from a verb signifying to be firm, secure, to be true and faithful. It is a word expressing consent or strong approbation, a word of strong asseveration. It means verily, certainly, so be it.

14 For, if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. 15 But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

'Trespasses.' Offences, faults. To forgive others when they offend or injure us. This is constantly required in the bible. Our Saviour says we should forgive even if the offence be committed seventy times seven times, Matt. xviii. 22.

16 ¶ Moreover, when ye fast, be not as the hypo-



crites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.

The word 'fast' literally signifies to abstain from food and drink, whether from necessity, or as a religious observance. It is, however, commonly applied in the bible to the latter. It is, then, an expression of grief or sorrow. Such is the constitution of the body, that in a time of grief or sorrow we are not disposed to eat. Fasting, then, is the natural expression of grief. This is the foundation of its being applied to religion as a sacred rite. It is because the soul, when oppressed and burdened by a sense of sin, is so filled with grief that the body refuses food. It is, therefore, appropriated always to scenes of penitence, of godly sorrow, of suffering, and to those facts and scenes of religion that are fitted to produce grief, as the prevalence of iniquity, or some dark impending calamity, or storm, or tempest, pestilence, plague, or famine.

The Jews fasted often. They had four annual fasts—in memory of the capture of Jerusalem, Jer. lii. 7; of the burning of the temple, Jer. li. 12; of the death of Gedaliah, Jer. xli. 1, 2; and of the commencement of the attack on Jerusalem, Zech. viii. 19. In addition to these they had a multitude of occasional fasts. It was customary, also, for the pharisees to fast twice a week, Luke xviii. 12. 'Of a sad countenance.' That is, sour, morose, assumed expressions of unfelt sorrow. 'They disfigure their faces.' That is, they do not anoint and wash themselves as usual; they are uncombed, filthy, and haggard. It is said that they were often in the habit of throwing ashes on their heads and faces; and this mixing with their tears, seemed still farther to disfigure their faces. So much pains will men take, and so much suffering will they undergo, and so much that is ridiculous will men assume, in their foolish attempts to impose on God and men. But they deceive neither. Hypocrites overact their part. Not having the genuine principles of piety at heart, they know not its proper expression, and hence appear contemptible and abominable.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head, and wash thy face; 18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father, which is in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

That is, appear as you do daily. Do not assume any new appearance, or change your visage or dress. The Jews and all neighbouring nations were much in the habit of washing and anointing their bodies. This washing was performed at every



meal; and where it could be effected, the head, or other parts of the body, was daily anointed with sweet, or olive oil.

The meaning of this whole commandment is—When you regard it to be your duty to fast, do it as a thing expressing deep feeling, or sorrow for sin, or calamity; not by assuming unfelt gravity and moroseness, but in your ordinary dress and appearance; not to attract attention, but as an expression of feeling towards God.

19 ¶ Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal :

As the orientalists delighted in display, in splendid equipage, and costly garments, their treasures consisted much in beautiful and richly ornamented articles of apparel. See Gen. xlv. 22. Josh. vii. 21. Judges xiv. 12. This fact will account for the use of the word ‘moth.’ When we speak of wealth, we think at once of gold, and silver, and lands, and houses. When a Hebrew or an orientalist spoke of wealth, he thought first of what would make display; and included, as an essential part, splendid articles of dress. The moth would destroy their apparel, the rust their silver and gold; thus all their treasure would waste away.

20 But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: 21 For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

‘Lay up treasures in heaven.’ Do not exhaust all your strength, and spend your days, in providing for the life here, but let your chief anxiety be to be prepared for eternity. To have treasure in heaven, is to possess evidence that its purity and joys will be ours; to be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The heart, or affections, will of course be fixed on the treasure. To regulate the heart, it is therefore important that the treasure, or object of attachment, should be right.

22. The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. 23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

‘The light of the body,’ &c. When the eye is directed singly and steadily towards an object, and is in health, or is single, every thing is clear and plain. If it is diseased, nothing

is seen clearly, every thing is dim and confused. The man, therefore, is unsteady. The eye regulates the motion of the body. To see clearly, to have an object distinctly in view, is necessary to correct and regulate action. So Jesus says, in order that the conduct may be right, it is important to fix the affections on heaven. Having the affections there—having the eye of faith single, steady, unwavering—the whole body, all the conduct, will be correspondent. ‘Thy body shall be full of light.’ Your conduct will be regular and steady. All that is needful to direct the body is that the eye be fixed right. No other light is required. So all that is needful to direct the soul and the conduct is that the eye of faith be fixed on heaven, that the affections be there. ‘If therefore the light that is in thee,’ &c. The meaning of this passage may be thus expressed: The light of the body, the guide and director, is the eye. All know how calamitous it is when that light is irregular or extinguished, when the eye is diseased or lost. So the light that is in us is the soul. If that soul is debased by attending exclusively to earthly objects—if it is diseased, and not fixed on heaven—how much darker and more dreadful will it be than any darkness of the eye!

24 ¶ No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

Christ proceeds to illustrate the necessity of laying up treasures in heaven from a well known fact, that a servant cannot serve two masters at the same time, especially when their characters are opposite. His affections and obedience would be divided, and he would fail altogether in his duty to one or the other. This is a law of human nature. The supreme affections can be fixed on only one object. So, says Jesus, the servant of God cannot at the same time obey him and be avaricious, or seek treasures supremely on earth. One interferes with the other, and one will be and must be surrendered. ‘Mammon.’ Mammon is a Syriac word, a name given to an idol worshipped as the god of riches. See Luke xvi. 9—11.

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

The general design of the paragraph, 25—34, which closes the chapter, is to warn his disciples against avarice, and undue anxiety about the supply of their wants. This Christ does by four arguments or considerations, expressing by unequalled beauty and force, the duty of depending for the things which we need on the

providence of God. The first is stated in the 25th verse: 'Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?' God will take care of these. He has given life, a far greater blessing than meat; he has created the body, of far more consequence than raiment. Shall not He, who has conferred the greater blessing, be willing to give the less? Shall not He, who has formed the body so curiously, and made such a display of power and goodness, see that it is properly protected and clothed? 'No thought.' No undue thought. Be not over anxious. The word used here often denotes anxious cares and improper solicitude. See Luke viii. 14; xxi. 34. Phil. iv. 6. There is a degree of anxiety and industry about the things of this life which is proper. See 1 Tim. v. 8. 2 Thess. iii. 10. Rom. xiii. 11. But it should not be our supreme concern: it should not lead to improper anxiety; it should not take time that ought to be devoted to religion. 'For your life.' For what will support your life. 'Meat.' This word here means food in general. This was the old English meaning of the word.

26 Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?

The second argument for confidence in the providence of God is derived from a beautiful reference to the fowls of heaven. See, said the Saviour, see the fowls of the air; they have no anxiety about the supply of their wants; they do not sow or reap: in innumerable flocks they fill the air; they perch at ease on every spray: yet how few die with hunger! how regularly are they fed from the hand of God! how he ministers to their unnumbered wants! He sees their young open wide their mouths, and seek their meat at his hand, and how regularly are their necessities supplied! You, said the Saviour to his disciples, you are of more consequence than they are; and shall God feed them in such numbers, and suffer you to want? It cannot be. 'Better than they.' Of more consequence. Your lives are of more importance than theirs, and God will therefore provide for them.

27 Which of you, by taking thought, can add one cubit unto his stature?

The third argument is taken from their extreme weakness and helplessness. With all your care you cannot increase your stature a single cubit. God, by his providence, orders and arranges the circumstances of your life. Beyond that appointment of his providence, beyond his care for you, your efforts avail nothing. How obvious is the duty of depending on him, and of beginning all your efforts, feeling that he only can grant you the

means of preserving life! 'By taking thought.' By care or anxiety. 'One cubit.' The cubit of the scriptures is not far from twenty-two inches. Terms of length are often applied to life. Thus, it is said, 'Thou hast made my days as a hand-breadth,' Ps. xxxix. 5; 'Teach me the measure of my days,' Ps. xxxix. 4. In this place it is used to denote a small length. You cannot increase your stature even a cubit, or in the smallest degree. Compare Luke xii. 26.

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: 29 And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

The fourth consideration is taken from the lilies of the valley. Watch the growing of the lily. It toils not, and it spins not. Yet night and day it grows and spreads out its beauty, expands its blossom and fills the air with fragrance, and meets the eye with perfect loveliness. Yet soon it will fade, and the beautiful flower will be cut down and burned. God so little regards the bestowment of beauty and ornament as to give the highest adorning to this which is soon to perish. When he thus clothes a lily—a fair flower, soon to perish—will he be unmindful of his children? Shall they—dear to his Love and endowed with immortality—shall they lack that which is proper for them, and shall they in vain trust the God that decks the lily of the valley? He will much more clothe you.

30 Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, *shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?*

The most common kind of ovens were made by excavating the earth two and a half feet in diameter, and from five to six feet deep. This kind of ovens is still used in Persia. The bottom was paved with stones. It was heated by putting wood or dry grass into the oven; and when heated, the ashes were removed, and the bread was placed on the heated stones.

31 Therefore, take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed? 32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek;) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

'For after all these things do the Gentiles seek,' That is, those destitute of the true doctrines of religion, make it their



chief anxiety thus to seek food and raiment. But you, who have a knowledge of your Father in heaven, who know that he will provide for your wants, should not be unduly anxious.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Seek first his kingdom; seek first to be righteous, and to become interested in his favour, and all necessary things will be added to you. God will give you that which he deems best for you.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

'Take no thought,' &c. That is, take no undue anxiety. Commit your way to God. It is wholly uncertain whether you may live to see to-morrow. If you do, it will bring its own trouble. And it will also bring the proper supply of your wants. God will be the same Father then as now. 'The morrow shall take thought.' The morrow shall have anxieties and cares of its own, but God will provide for them as they occur. Do not, therefore, increase the cares of this day by borrowing trouble respecting the future. Do your duty faithfully now, and depend on the mercy of God and his divine help as to the troubles which are yet to come.

## CHAPTER VII.

1 JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

This command refers to rash, censorious, and unjust judgment. See Rom. ii. 1. Luke vi. 37 explains it in the sense of condemning. Christ does not condemn our forming an opinion of the conduct of others, for it is impossible not to form an opinion of conduct that we know to be evil. But what he refers to, is a habit of forming a judgment hastily, harshly, and without candour, and of expressing such an opinion harshly and unnecessarily when formed.

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

This was a proverb among the Jews. It expressed a truth; and Christ did not hesitate to adopt it as conveying his own sentiments. It refers no less to the way in which men will judge of us, than to the rule by which God will judge us. See 2 Sam. xxii. 27. Mark iv. 24. James ii. 13. 'Mete.' Measure. You shall be judged by the same rule which you apply to others.

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? 4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

A mote signifies any light substance, as dry chaff, or fine spires of grass or grain. 'Beam.' This word here signifies a large piece of squared timber. The one is an exceedingly small object, the other a large one. The meaning is, that we are much more quick and acute in judging of the small offences of others, than of much larger offences in ourselves.

5 Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

Christ directs us to the proper way of forming an opinion of others, and of reproving and correcting them. The sentiment is, that the readiest way to judge of the imperfections of others is to be free from greater ones ourselves. This qualifies us for judging, makes us candid and consistent, and enables us to see things as they are, and to make proper allowances for frailty and imperfection.

6 ¶ Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

The word 'holy' means here any thing connected with religion; admonition, precept, or doctrine. 'Pearls' are precious stones found in shell-fish, chiefly in India, in the waters that surround Ceylon. They are used to denote any thing peculiarly precious, Rev. xvii. 4; xviii. 12—16. Matt. xiii. 45. In this place they are used to denote the doctrine of the gospel. 'Dogs' signify men who spurn, oppose, and abuse that doctrine; men of peculiar sourness and malignity of temper, who meet it like growling and quarrelsome dogs, 2 Peter ii. 22. Rev. xxii. 15. 'Swine' denote those who would trample the precepts under feet; men of impurity of life; corrupt and polluted, profane, obscene, and sensual; who would not know the value of the gospel, and who would tread it down as swine would pearls, 2 Pet. ii. 22. Prov. xi. 22.

7 ¶ Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: 8 For every one that asketh receiveth; and he that

seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. 9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? 10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? 11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?

'Ask, and it shall be given you,' &c. There are here three different forms presented of seeking the things which we need from God, asking, seeking, and knocking. The latter is taken from the act of knocking at a door for admittance. See Luke xiii. 45. Rev. iii. 20. The phrases signify to seek with earnestness, and diligence, and perseverance.

The promise is, that what we seek shall be given us. It is of course implied that we seek with a proper spirit, with humility, sincerity, and perseverance. It is implied, also, that we ask the things which it may be consistent for God to give—that is, things which he has promised to give, and which would be best for us and his kingdom, 1 John v. 14. Of that God is to be the judge. And here there is the utmost latitude which a creature can ask, God is willing to provide for us, to forgive our sins, to save our souls, to befriend us in trial, to comfort us in death, to extend the gospel through the world. Man can ask no higher things of God; and these he may ask, assured that God is willing to grant them.

Christ encourages us to do this by the conduct of parents. God is better and kinder than the most tender earthly parents; and with what confidence, therefore, may we come as his children, and ask what we need! Parents, he says, are evil; that is, are imperfect, often partial, blind, and sometimes passionate; but God is free from all this, and therefore is ready and willing to aid us. 'Every one that asketh receiveth.' That is, every one who asks aright, who prays in faith, and in submission to the will of God. He does not always give the very thing which we ask, but he gives what would be better. See 2 Cor. xii. 7—9. 'A fish.' There are fishes that have some resemblance to a serpent. Yet no parent would attempt to deceive his child in this. So God will not give to us that which might appear to be of use, but which would be injurious.

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

This command has been usually called the Saviour's golden rule, a name given to it on account of its great value. All that you expect or desire of others in similar circumstances, do

to them. Act not from selfishness or injustice, but put yourself in the place of the other, and ask what you would expect of him then. It has been well said that this law is what the balance wheel is to machinery. It would prevent all irregularity of movement in the moral world, as that does in a steam-engine. It is easily applied, its justice is seen by all men, and all must acknowledge its force and value. 'This is the law and the prophets.' That is, this is the sum or explanation of the Old Testament. It is no where found in so many words, but it is a summary expression of all that the law required.

13 ¶ Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat, 14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.

Christ here compares the way to life to an entrance through a gate. The words 'straight,' and 'strait,' have very different meanings. The former means not crooked; the latter narrow, difficult to be entered. This is the word used here, and it means that the way to heaven is narrow, close, and not obviously entered. The way to death is open, broad, and thronged. Multitudes are in it. It is the great highway in which men go. They fall into it easily, and without effort, and go without thought. If they wished to leave that, and go by a narrow gate to the city, it would require effort and thought. So, says Christ, diligence is needed to enter into life. See Luke xiii. 24. None go of course. All must strive to obtain it; and so narrow, unfrequented, and solitary is it, that few find it.

15 ¶ Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

'False prophets.' A false prophet is a teacher of incorrect doctrine, or one falsely and unjustly laying claims to divine inspiration. It probably had reference to the false teachers then among the Jews. 'Who come in sheep's clothing.' The sheep is an emblem of innocence, sincerity, and harmlessness. To come in sheep's clothing, is to assume the appearance of sanctity and innocence, when the heart is evil. 'Ravening wolves.' Rapacious; or disposed to plunder. Applied to the false teachers, it means that they assumed the appearance of holiness, in order that they might the more readily get the property of the people. They were full of extortion and excess. See Matt. xxiii. 25.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?



The proper test of men's characters is here stated. Men do not judge of a tree by its leaves, or bark, or flowers, but by the fruit which it bears. The flowers may be handsome and fragrant; the foliage thick and green; but these are merely ornamental. It is the fruit that is of chief service to man; and he forms his opinion of the nature and value of the tree by that fruit. So of pretensions to religion. The profession may be fair; but the conduct—the fruit in the eye of the world—is to determine the nature of the principles.

17 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. 18 A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. 19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

The word 'corrupt' here does not signify, as our translation would indicate, that the tree had been good, but had become vitiated; but a tree of a useless character, of a nature that produces nothing beneficial.

21 ¶ Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

The power of working miracles, and distinguished talents, have no necessary connexion with piety. God may as well, if he chooses, give the power of raising the dead to a wicked man, as the skill of healing to a wicked physician. So of preaching, or prophesying. God may use the agency of a man of talents, though not truly pious, to carry forward his purposes. Saving power on the mind is the work of God; and he can convey it by any agency which he may choose. Accordingly, many may be found in that day who may have been endowed with powers of prophecy, or miracle; in the same way as many men of distinguished talents may be found, yet destitute of piety, and shut out of his kingdom. See Mark ix. 38. Luke ix. 49. 1 Cor. xiii. 1—3.

22 Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?

'In that day.' That is, in the last day, the day of judgment; the time when the principles of all pretenders to prophecy and piety will be tried.

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity.

'Profess unto them.' Say unto them; plainly declare. 'I never knew you,' That is, I never approved, loved, or regarded you as my friends. See Ps. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 19. 1 Cor. viii. 3. This proves that, with all their pretensions, they had never been true followers of Christ.

24 ¶ Therefore, whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: 25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. 26 And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: 27 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Jesus Christ closes the sermon on the mount by a beautiful comparison, illustrating the benefit of attending to his words. It was not sufficient to hear them; they must be obeyed. He compares the man who should hear, and obey him, to a man who should build his house on a rock. Palestine was to a considerable extent a land of hills and mountains. Like other countries of that description, it was subject to sudden and violent rains. The Jordan, the principal stream, was annually swollen to a great extent, and became rapid and furious in its course. The streams which ran among the hills, whose channels might have been dry during some months of the year, became suddenly swollen with the rain, and would pour down impetuously into the plains below. Every thing in the way of these torrents would be swept off. Even a house erected within the reach of these sudden inundations, and especially if founded on sand, or any unsolid basis, would not stand before them. The rising, bursting stream would shake it to its foundation; the rapid torrent would gradually wash away its base; it would totter and fall, and be swept away. Rocks in that land were common, and it was easy to secure for their houses a solid foundation. No comparison could, to a Jew, have been more strikingly adapted to teach that tempests, and storms of affliction and persecution, beat around the soul. Suddenly, when we think we are in safety, the heavens may be overcast; the storm may lower; and calamity beat upon us. In a moment, health, friends, comforts, may be gone. How desirable then to be possessed of something that the tempest can-

not reach! Such is an interest in Christ, attention to his words, reliance on his promises, confidence in his protection, and a hope of heaven through his blood. Earthly calamities do not reach these: and, possessed of religion, all the storms and tempests of life may beat harmlessly around us.

28 And it came to pass when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: 29 For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes.

'His doctrine.' His teaching. 'As one having authority, and not as the scribes.' The scribes were the learned men and teachers of the Jewish nation, and were principally pharisees. They consumed much of their time in useless disputes and vain jangling. Jesus was open, plain, grave, useful; delivering truth as became the oracles of God; not trifling; teaching as having power, as it is in the original, and not in the vain and foolish manner of the Jewish doctors. He came with authority such as no man could have, and it is therefore not surprising that his explanations astonished them.

## CHAPTER VIII.

1 WHEN he was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him. 2 And, behold, there came a leper and worshipped him, saying, Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.

No disease with which the human family has been afflicted, has been more dreadful than that which is often mentioned in the bible as the leprosy. It first exhibits itself on the surface of the skin, and commonly resembles the spot made by the puncture of a pin, or the pustules of a ringworm. The spots generally make their appearance very suddenly; commonly exhibit themselves, at first, on the face, about the nose and eyes, and increase in size for a number of years, till they become as large as a pea or a bean; and though few at first, gradually spread till they cover the whole body.

But though the appearance of the disease is at first in the skin, yet it is deeply seated in the bones, and marrow, and joints of the body. We have reason to suppose that it is concealed in the system for a number of years, till at last it gives fearful indications on the skin of its having gained a deeply rooted and permanent existence. A leprous person may live twenty, or thirty, or even fifty years, if he received the disease at his birth, but they will be years of indescribable misery. The bones and marrow are pervaded with the disease. The malady advances from one stage to another with slow and certain ruin. The joints, and hands, and

feet, lose their power; and the body collapses, or falls together, in a form hideous and awful.

This disease is contagious and hereditary. It is easily communicated from one to another, and is transmitted to the third and fourth generation.

Moses gave particular directions by which the real leprosy was to be distinguished from other diseases. See Lev. xiii. The leprous person was separated from the congregation. The inspection of the disease was committed to the priest; and a declaration on his part that the person was healed, was sufficient evidence to restore him to the congregation. It was required also that the leprous person should bring an offering to the priest. See Lev. xiv. In compliance with the laws of the land, Jesus directed the man whom he had healed to make the customary offering, and to obtain the testimony of the priest that he was healed. 'Worshipped him.' Bowed down before him, to show him respect. See note Matt. ii. 2. 'If thou wilt.' This was an exhibition of great faith, and also an acknowledgment of his dependence on the will of Jesus, in order to be healed. So every sinner must come. He must feel that Jesus can save him. He must also feel that he has no claim on Christ; that his salvation depends on his sovereign will; and must cast himself at his feet with the feeling of the leper. Happily, no one ever came to Jesus with this feeling, who was not received, and pardoned.

'Make me clean.' Heal me. The leprosy was regarded as an unclean and disgusting disease. To be healed, therefore, was expressed by being cleansed from it.

3 And Jesus put forth *his* hand, and touched him, saying, I will; be thou clean. And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

It was an offence to the Jews to touch a leprous person. The act of putting forth his hand, and touching him, therefore, expressed the intention of Jesus to cure him, and was a pledge that he was, in fact, already cured.

4 And Jesus saith unto him, See thou tell no man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

'See thou tell no man.' This command is to be understood as extending only to the time until he had made the proper representation to the priest. It was his duty to hasten to him immediately; not to delay by talking about it, but as the first thing, to obey the laws of God, and make proper acknowledgments to him by an offering. The place where this cure was wrought was in Galilee, a distance of forty or fifty miles from Jerusalem; and



it was his duty to make haste to the residence of the priest, and obtain his sanction to the reality of the cure. 'A testimony unto them.' Not to the priest, but to the people. Show thyself to the priest, and get his testimony to the reality of the cure, as a proof to the people that the healing is genuine. It was necessary that he should have that testimony, before he could be received into the congregation, or allowed to mingle with the people. Having this, he would be, of course, restored to the privileges of social and religious life, and the proof of the miracle, to the people, would be put beyond a doubt.

5 ¶ And when Jesus was entered into Capernaum there came unto him a centurion, beseeching him,

'Capernaum.' See note, ch. iv. 13. A centurion was a commander of a hundred men, in the Roman armies. Judea was a Roman province, and garrisons were kept there to preserve the people in subjection.

6 And saying, Lord, my servant lieth at home sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

'Sick of the palsy.' See note, ch. iv. 24.

7 And Jesus saith unto him, I will come and heal him. 8 The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

8. 'I am not worthy,' &c. This was an expression of great humility. It indicated a lowly spirit; a conviction of the great dignity and power of the Saviour, and a belief that he was so unlike him, and so far removed in character, that he was not fit that the Son of God should come into his dwelling. So humbly every truly penitent sinner feels; a feeling which is appropriate when he comes to Christ.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

He had full confidence in the ability of Jesus to heal his servant, and requested him simply to give the command as quite sufficient. This request he presented in a manner appropriate to a soldier. I am a man, says he, under authority. That is, I am subject to the command of others, and know how to obey. I have also under me soldiers who are accustomed to obedience. I say to one, Go, and he goes; and to another, Come, and he comes. I am prepared, therefore, to believe that your commands will be

obeyed. As these obey me, so do diseases, storms, and seas obey thee.

10 When Jesus heard *it*, he marvelled, and said to them that followed, Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

The word 'faith,' here means confidence, or belief that Christ had power to heal his servant. 'Jesus marvelled.' Or wondered at his faith; or deemed it remarkable. 'Not in Israel.' Israel was a name given to Jacob, Gen. xxxii. 28, 29, because, as a prince, he had power with God; because he persevered in wrestling with the Angel that met him, and obtained the blessing. It was given to the whole nation till the time of Jeroboam, when only the ten tribes that revolted received the name, probably because they were a majority of the nation. After the captivity of Babylon, it was given to all the Jews indiscriminately. See Matt. x. 6. Mark xv. 32.

11 And I say unto you, That many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven.

The phrase 'from the east and from the west,' in the scripture, is used to denote the whole world, Isa. xlv. 6; lix. 19. The phrase 'shall sit down' in the original, refers to the manner of sitting at meals, see note, Matt. xxiii. 6; and the enjoyments of heaven are described under the similitude of a feast or banquet: a very common manner of speaking of them, Matt. xxvi. 29. Luke xiv. 15; xxii. 30. It is used here to denote felicity and honour. To sit with those distinguished men was an honour, and would be expressive of great felicity.

12 But the children of the kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'The children of the kingdom.' In other words, the Jews. They supposed themselves peculiarly the favourites of Heaven. They thought they were by birth subjects of God's kingdom. They thought the Messiah would enlarge their nation, and spread the triumphs of their kingdom. They called themselves, therefore, the children or the members of the kingdom of God, to the exclusion of the Gentiles. Our Saviour used their language, and said, that many of the pagans would be saved, and many Jews lost. 'Shall be cast out into outer darkness,' &c. This is an image of future punishment. Feasts were given at night. The rooms were brilliantly illuminated; and the splendour within made the darkness without, the 'outer darkness,' gloomy indeed. See Matt. xxii. 18. The wicked who are lost will be shut out from the

light of heaven; from peace, and joy, and hope; will be cast into outer darkness; will weep in hopeless grief; and gnash their teeth in indignation against God, by whose just sentence they are excluded from the heavenly feast. What a striking image of future woe!

13 And Jesus said unto the centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, so be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

'He was healed in the self-same hour.' This showed decisively the goodness and power of Jesus. No miracle could be more complete. There could be no imposition, or deception.

This account, or one similar, is found in Luke vii. 1—10. The narratives agree in the character of the person, the place, and the time; the same substantial structure of the account; the expression of similar feelings; and the same answers, and the same result.

Matthew says, that the centurion came himself. Luke says, that he at first sent elders of the Jews, and then his particular friends. He also adds, that he was friendly to the Jews, and had built them a synagogue. The fact that the centurion came himself is no evidence that others did not come also. The centurion was a great favourite, and they would be anxious that what he desired of Jesus should be granted. At his suggestion, or of their own accord, they might apply to Jesus, and press the subject upon him, and be anxious to represent the case as favourably as possible. It is not at all improbable that the same representation and request might be made both by the centurion and his friends. Matthew fixed on the fact that the centurion came himself, and Luke on the remarkable zeal shown by the friends of a heathen; the interest they took in his welfare, and the circumstance that he had done much for them. Matthew was intent on the great leading facts of the cure. He was studious of brevity. He did not choose to explain the particular circumstances. He says that the centurion made the application, and received the answer. He does not say whether by himself, or by an agent. Luke explains particularly how it was done.

14 ¶ And when Jesus was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever. 15 And he touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

This account is contained also in Mark i. 29—31. and Luke iv. 38—41. Mark adds that Simon and Andrew lived together, and that James and John went with them to the house. He adds, also, that before the miracle, they spake to him about the sick person. The miracle was direct and complete. She was so completely restored as to attend them, and minister to them.

16 ¶ When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils : and he cast out the spirits with *his* word, and healed all that were sick ;

All that were brought to Jesus he healed. This was proof of two things : first, his great benevolence ; and, secondly, of his Divine mission. None of his miracles were performed merely to make a display of power. They were all connected with some works of benevolence. This was on the evening of the sabbath, Mark i. 21—32. The Jews kept the sabbath from evening to evening, Lev. xxiii. 32. On the sabbath they would not bring their sick to be healed, Luke xiii. 14 ; but as soon as it was closed, on the evening of the same day, they came in multitudes to be cured.

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

This passage is found in Isaiah liii. 4. Our English translation is, 'Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.' The word translated 'griefs' in Isaiah, and 'infirmities' in Matthew, means properly diseases of the body. To bear those griefs, is clearly to bear them away, or to remove them. This was done by his miraculous power in healing the sick. The word rendered 'sorrows,' in Isaiah, and 'sicknesses,' in Matthew, means pains, griefs, or anguish of mind. To carry them, is to sympathize with the sufferers ; to make provision for alleviating those sorrows ; and to take them away. This he did by his precepts and his example : the cause of all sorrows—sin—he removed by his atonement. The passage in Isaiah and Matthew mean precisely the same thing.

18 Now when Jesus saw great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

'Unto the other side.' Jesus was now in Capernaum, a city at the northwest corner of the sea of Tiberias, or sea of Galilee. See note Matt. iv. 18. The country to which he purposed to go was the region on the east of the sea of Tiberias.

19 And a certain scribe came, and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.  
20 And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air *have* nests ; but the Son of man hath not where to lay *his* head.

It is not improbable that this man, who had seen the miracles of Jesus, had formed an expectation that by following him he



should obtain some considerable worldly advantage. Christ in reply proclaimed his own poverty. The very foxes and birds, says he, have places of repose and shelter, but the Son of man has no home, and no pillow. He is a stranger in his own world; a wanderer and an outcast from the abodes of men. 'Son of man.' No title is more frequently given to the Saviour than this. When he speaks of himself, this is the most common appellation by which he is known. Probably there was a reference to Isaiah ix. 6, 'Unto us a Son is given.' The Saviour chose to adopt an appellation which identified him with ourselves. See Heb. ii. 14—16. Perhaps, also, he used it to signify the interest he felt in man; his peculiar love and friendship for him; and his willingness to devote himself to the best interests of the race.

21 And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

The word disciple properly signifies learner; and was given to his followers, because they received him as their teacher. See note Matt. v. 1. It does not of necessity mean that a disciple was a pious man, but only one of the multitude, who, for various causes, might attend on his instructions. See John vi. 66; ix. 28.

22 But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead.

The word dead is used in this passage in two different senses. The Jews used it often to express indifference towards a thing; or rather, to show that that thing has no influence over us. Thus, to be dead to the world; to be dead to the law, Rom. vii. 4; to be dead to sin, Rom. vi. 11; means that the world, law, and sin, have not influence or control over us; that we are free from them, and act as though they were not. So, men of the world are dead to religion. They see not its beauty; hear not its voice; are not won by its loveliness. This is the class of men to which the Saviour referred here. Let men, says he, who are uninterested in my work, and who are dead in sin, Eph. ii. 1, take care of the dead. Your duty is now to follow me.

There might be two reasons for this apparently harsh direction. One was, to try the character and attachment of the man. If he had proper love for Christ, he would be willing to leave his friends even in the most tender and trying circumstances. This is required, Matt. x. 37. Our Saviour taught here, that a regard to friends, and ease, and comfort, should be subordinate to the gospel; and that we should always be ready to sacrifice these when duty to God requires it.

23 ¶ And when he was entered into a ship, his disciples followed him.

This was on the sea of Tiberias. The 'ship' in which they sailed was a small open boat, with sails, such as were commonly

used for fishing on the lake. 'His disciples.' Not merely the apostles, but others. There were many other ships in company with him, Mark iv. 36. This circumstance would render the miracle much more striking and impressive.

24 And, behold, there arose a great tempest in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves : but he was asleep.

'A great tempest.' A violent storm ; or a wind so strong as to endanger their lives. This lake was subject to sudden squalls. 'The ship was covered with the waves.' The billows dashed against the ship, Mark iv. 37 ; so that it was fast filling, and in danger of sinking. 'He was asleep.' On the hinder part of the vessel, on a pillow, Mark iv. 38. It was in the night, and Jesus had retired to rest, probably weary, and he slept calmly and serenely.

25 And his disciples came to him, and awoke him, saying, Lord, save us : we perish.

'Save us.' Save our lives. 'We perish.' We are in danger of perishing. This showed great confidence in the Saviour. It shows also where those should always go, who feel that they are in danger of perishing. There is none that can save from the storms of Divine wrath but the Son of God.

26 And he saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith ? Then he arose, and rebuked the winds and the sea ; and there was a great calm.

'Why are ye fearful ?' You should have remembered that the Son of God, the Messiah, was on board. You should not have forgotten that he had power to save, and that with him you are safe. Christians should never fear danger, disease, or death. With Jesus they are safe. No enemy can reach him ; and as he is safe, so they shall be also, John xiv. 19. 'Rebuked the winds.' Reproved them ; or commanded them to be still. What a power was this ! What irresistible proof that he was Divine ! His word awed the tempest, and allayed the storm ! There is not, any where, a sublimer description of a display of power. Nor could there be stronger proof that he was truly the Son of God. 'Great calm.' The winds were still ; and the sea ceased to endanger their lives.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him !

'The men marvelled.' Wondered ; or were amazed. 'What manner of man !' What personage ! How unlike other men ! What a vast display of power ; and how far exalted above mortals must he be !

None but God could calm the heaving billows, and scatter the tempest. No scene could have been more grand than this display of the power of Jesus. The darkness; the dashing waves; the howling winds; the heaving and tossing ship; and the fears and cries of the seamen; all by a single word hushed into calm repose; all present an image of power and divinity irresistibly grand and awful. So the tempest rolls and thickens over the head of the awakened sinner. So he trembles over immediate and awful destruction. So while the storm of wrath howls, and hell threatens to engulf him, he comes trembling to the Saviour. Christ hears; he rebukes the storm; and the sinner is safe; indescribable peace takes possession of the soul; and he glides on a tranquil sea to the haven of eternal rest. See Isa. lviii. 20, 21. Rom. v. 1. Phil. iv. 7.

28 ¶ And when he was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes, there met him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

The same account of the demoniacs substantially is found in Mark v. 1—20, and Luke viii. 26—39. 'Country of the Gergesenes,' Mark, v. 1, says that he came into the country of the Gadarenes. This difference is only apparent. Gadara was a city not far from the lake Genesareth. Note Matt. iv. 23. Gergesa was a city about twelve miles to the south-east of Gadara. He came into the region in which the two cities were situated, and one evangelist mentioned one, and the other another. No men would have written in this manner but those who were acquainted with the facts. 'There met him two,' Mark and Luke speak of only one that met him. 'There met him out of the tombs a man,' Mark v. 2; 'There met him out of the tombs a certain man,' Luke viii. 27. It is to be observed, however, that neither Mark nor Luke say that there was no more than one. They might be led to fix the attention on one of them that was more notorious, and furious, and difficult to be managed. Had they denied plainly that there was more than one, there would have been an irreconcilable contradiction. As it is, it shows that they were honest witnesses. Witnesses in courts of law often differ in unimportant matters; and, provided the main narrative coincides, their testimony is more valuable.

Luke has given us a hint why he recorded only the cure of one of them. He says, there met him 'out of the city,' a man, &c.; or, as it should be rendered, 'a man of the city,' a citizen. Yet the man did not dwell in the city; for he adds in the same verse, 'neither abode he in any house, but in the tombs.' The truth was, that he was well known; and the people felt a deep interest in his case. Luke was therefore particularly struck with it; and as his cure fully established the power of Jesus, he recorded it.

The other that Matthew mentions was probably a stranger, or a person less notorious. 'Coming out of the tombs.' Mark and Luke say that they dwelt in the tombs. The sepulchres of the Jews were commonly caves, beyond the walls of the cities in which they dwelt, or excavations made in the sides of hills, or sometimes in solid rocks. These caves, or excavations, were sometimes of great extent. They descended to them by flights of steps. They afforded, therefore, to demoniacs retreat and shelter. They delighted in these gloomy and melancholy recesses, as congenial to the wretched state of their minds.

29 And behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? art thou come hither to torment us before the time?

'What have we to do with thee?' The meaning is, Why dost thou trouble, or disturb us? See 2 Sam. xvi. 10. 2 Kings ix. 18. Ezra iv. 3. 'Son of God.' The title, Son of God, is often given to Christ. It denotes his peculiar and near relation to the Father, as evinced by his resurrection, Ps. ii. 7. Acts xiii. 33. It denotes his peculiar relation to God as his Father, Luke i. 35; and is equivalent to a declaration that he is Divine, or equal to the Father, John x. 36. 'Art thou come hither to torment us,' &c. By the time here mentioned is meant the day of judgment. The bible reveals the doctrine that evil spirits are permitted to tempt and afflict men, but that in the day of judgment they also will be condemned, and bound to everlasting punishment with all the wicked, 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6. These spirits seemed to be apprized of that, and alarmed lest the day which they feared had come.

Mark and Luke say that Jesus inquired the name of the principal demoniac, and that he called his name Legion, for they were many. The name legion was given to a division in the Roman army. In the time of Christ it consisted of six thousand. It was used to signify a large number, without specifying the exact amount.

30 And there was a good way off from them a herd of many swine, feeding. 31 So the devils besought him, saying, If thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine. 32 And he said unto them, Go. And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters. 33 And they that kept them, fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing; and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils.



'They that kept them fled.' These swine were doubtless owned by the inhabitants of Gadara. Swine were to Jews unclean animals, and it was unlawful for them to eat them, Lev. xi. 7. The Jews were forbidden by their own laws to keep them, even for the purpose of traffic. This conduct is easily vindicated. 1. If Christ be Divine as well as human—God as well as man—then he had an original right to that and all other property, and might dispose of it as he pleased, Ps. l. 10—12. 2. If this property was held by the Jews, it was a violation of their law, and it was right that they should suffer the loss; if by the Gentiles, it was known also to be a violation of the law of the people among whom they lived; a temptation and a snare to them; and an abomination in their sight; and it was proper that the nuisance should be removed.

34 And behold, the whole city came out to meet Jesus: and when they saw him, they besought *him* that he would depart out of their coasts.

'The whole city came out.' The people of the city probably came with a view of arresting him for the injury done to the property; but seeing him, and being awed by his presence, they only besought him to leave them. 'Out of their coasts.' Out of their country. This shows: 1. That the design of Satan is to prejudice men against the Saviour; and even to make what Christ does an occasion why they should desire him to leave them. 2. The power of avarice. These men preferred their property to the Saviour. It is no uncommon thing for men to love the world so much, as to see no beauty in religion, and no excellence in the Saviour; and, rather than part with it, to beseech Jesus to withdraw from them. The most grovelling employment; the most abandoned sins; the most loathsome vices, are often loved more than the presence of Jesus, and all the blessings of his salvation. Alas, how many are there, like the dwellers in Gadara, that ask him to depart; that see him go without a sigh; and that never, never, again behold him coming to bless them with salvation.

## CHAPTER IX.

1 AND he entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into his own city.

Jesus recrossed the lake of Genesareth, and returned to his own city. By 'his own city' is meant Capernaum, Mark ii. 1, the city which was at that time his home, or where he had his dwelling. See ch. iv. 13. This same account, with some additional circumstances, is contained in Mark ii. 3—12, and Luke v. 18—26.

2 And, behold, they brought to him a man sick of

the palsy, lying on a bed: and Jesus, seeing their faith, said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

See Note Matt. iv. 24. 'Lying on a bed.' This was a portable bed, probably a mattress, or perhaps a mere blanket spread to lie on, supported, so as to be easily borne.

Mark says 'they uncovered the roof,' ch. ii. 4. Luke says, 'they went upon the housetop, and let him down through the tiling,' ch. v. 19. To us it would appear that much injury must have been done to the house where Jesus was, and that they must be much incommoded by the removal of tiles, and rafters, &c. Acquaintance, however, with the mode of building in the east, removes the difficulty. Houses, in eastern countries, are commonly square in their form, and of a single story. On approaching them from the street, a single door is seen in the centre, and directly above it a single latticed window. On entering the door, the first room is a small square room, surrounded with benches, called the porch. In this room the master of a family commonly transacts business, and, on private occasions, receives visits. Passing through the porch, you enter a large square place, directly in the centre of the building, called the court. Luke says that the paralytic was let down 'into the midst:' not in the midst of the people, but of the building—the middle place of the house. In this large place company is received on marriage, and other festive occasions. This room is surrounded by a gallery, or covered walk, on every side. From that covered walk doors open into the other apartments of the house. So that access from one room to another is always through the centre or court. This court is commonly uncovered or opened above. In wet weather, however, and in times of great heat of the sun, it is covered with an awning or canvass, stretched on cords, and capable of being easily removed or rolled up. This is what Mark probably means when he says they uncovered the roof. They rolled up or removed this awning.

From the court to the roof the ascent is by flights of stairs, either in the covered walk or gallery, or in the porch. The roof is nearly flat. On those roofs blades of grass, or wheat, or barley sometimes spring up, but they are soon withered by the sun, Ps. cxxix. 6—8. On such a roof Rahab concealed the spies, Josh. ii. 6; Samuel talked with Saul, 1 Sam. ix. 25; David walked at even tide, 2 Sam. xi. 2; and Peter went up to pray, Acts x. 9. This roof was surrounded with a balustrade, or railing, breast high, on the sides, covered with terras or matting. A breastwork or railing was of course built in the same manner around the open space in the centre, to prevent them from falling into the court below. This railing, or breastwork, is what Luke, ch. v. 19, says they let him down through. They removed it probably so that the couch could be conveniently let down with cords; and,

standing on the roof over the Saviour, they let the man down directly before him. The pains which they had taken, and the perseverance which they had manifested, was the evidence of their faith or confidence in his power, and their desire that the sick man should be brought into his presence. 'Be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee.' The man trembled as he came before the Saviour, and feared that he was so great a sinner that Christ would not regard him. He therefore assured him that his offences were pardoned, and that he might lay aside his fears. Jesus intended to show his power to forgive sins. Had he stated it without any miracle, the Jews would not have believed it, and even his disciples might have been staggered. In proof of it, he worked a miracle; and no one, therefore, could doubt that he had the power. The miracle was wrought in express attestation of the assertion that he had the power to forgive sins. As God would not work a miracle to confirm a falsehood, or to deceive men, the miracle was a solemn confirmation, on the part of God, that Jesus had such power.

3 And, behold, certain of the scribes said within themselves, This *man* blasphemeth.

The word 'blaspheme' originally means to speak evil of any one, to injure by words, to blame unjustly. When applied to God, it means to speak of him unjustly, to ascribe to him acts and attributes which he does not possess, to speak impiously or profanely, to blame him. It means, also, to attempt to do or say a thing which belongs to him alone, or which he only can do. This is its meaning here. Christ was charged with saying a thing in his own name, or attempting to do a thing which properly belonged to God; thus assuming the place of God, and invading his prerogatives. 'None,' said they, (as in Mark and Luke,) 'can forgive sins but God only.' In this they reasoned correctly. See Isa. xliii. 25; xliv. 22. By saying that he forgave sins, Jesus was understood to affirm that he was Divine; and as he gave a proof of it by working a miracle expressly to confirm the claim, it follows that he is Divine, or equal with the Father.

4 And Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

'Jesus, knowing their thoughts.' Mark says, 'Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned.' The power of searching the heart, and knowing the thoughts of men, belongs only to God, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Rom. viii. 27. Rev. ii. 23. Jer. xvii. 10. In claiming this, as Jesus did here, and often elsewhere, he gave clear proofs of his omniscience, John ii. 24, 25.

5 For whether is easier to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee, or to say, *Arise*, and walk? 6 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to

forgive sins, (then saith he to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. 7 And he arose, and departed to his house. 8 But when the multitude saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

'They glorified God.' See note Matt. v. 16. To glorify God, here, means to praise him, or to acknowledge his power. The expression, 'which had given such power to men,' was a part of their praise. It expresses no sentiment of the evangelist about the nature of Christ.

9 ¶ And as Jesus passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom: and he saith unto him, Follow me. And he arose, and followed him.

'Sitting at the receipt of custom.' That is, at the place where custom, or tribute, was received; or in other words he was a publican, or tax-gatherer. See note Matt. v. 47. This man was Matthew, the writer of this gospel. The same account is found in Mark ii. 14, and Luke v. 27, 28. Both these evangelists call him Levi. The Jews were in the habit of giving several names to the same person. Thus Peter was called Simon and Cephas. It is worthy of remark that Luke has mentioned a circumstance favourable to Matthew, which Matthew himself has omitted. Luke says, 'he left all.' Had Matthew said this, it would have been a commendation of himself. No men were ever further from praising themselves than the evangelists.

10 ¶ And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples.

This feast was given to him by Levi, or Matthew, Luke v. 29. To receive Christ hospitably and kindly was a commendable act, and it strongly evinces Matthew's freedom from ostentation that he has suppressed the fact. It thus illustrates Matt. vi. 1—4. 'At meat.' At the table, at supper.

11 And when the pharisees saw *it*, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners?

To eat and drink with others denotes intimacy and familiarity. The pharisees, by asking this question, accused him of seeking the society of such men, and of being the companion of the wicked. The inference they would draw was, that he could not be himself righteous, since he delighted in the company of abandoned men.



12 But when Jesus heard *that*, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick.

Jesus, in reply, said that the whole needed not a physician. Sick persons only needed his aid. A physician would not commonly be found with those that were in health. His proper place was among the sick. So, says he, If you pharisees are such as you think yourselves, already pure and holy, you do not need my aid. I came on purpose to save sinners. My business is with them.

13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice; for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

To reprove them, and to vindicate his own conduct, he appealed to a passage of scripture with which they ought to have been acquainted. 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice,' Hos. vi. 6. This is a Hebrew mode of speaking, and means, I prefer mercy to sacrifice; or, I am more pleased with acts of benevolence and kindness than with a mere external compliance with the duties of religion. Mercy, here, means benevolence or kindness towards others. Sacrifices were the principal part of the worship of the Jews, and hence came to signify external worship in general. This is the meaning of the word here. The sense in which our Saviour applies it is this: You pharisees are exceedingly tenacious of the external duties of religion. But God has declared that he prefers benevolence or mercy to those outward duties. It is proper, therefore, that I should associate with sinners for the purpose of doing them good. 'I came not to call the righteous,' &c. No human beings are by nature righteous, Ps. xiv. 3. Rom. iii. 10—18. The pharisees, however, pretended to be righteous. Christ meant to affirm that his proper and only business was to call to repentance such men as he was now with. He came to seek and save such, and it was his proper business, therefore, to associate with them.

14 ¶ Then came to him the disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the pharisees fast oft, but thy disciples fast not? 15 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber mourn, as long as the bridegroom is with them? but the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

See also Mark ii. 18—22. Luke v. 33—39. 'John.' That is, of John the baptist. The pharisees fasted often, regularly twice a week, besides the great national days of fasting, Luke xviii. 12.

See note, Matt. vi. 16—18. This was the established custom of the land, and John did not feel himself authorized to make so great a change as to dispense with it. His disciples were desirous of knowing, therefore, why Jesus had done it. Besides, it is probable that this question was put to him when John was in prison; and his disciples involved in deep grief on account of it, observed days of fasting, and wondered that the followers of Jesus did not join with them.

Christ, in reply to them, used three illustrations, all of them going to establish the same thing, that we should observe a fitness and propriety in things. The first is taken from a marriage. The children of the bridechamber—that is, the bride-men, or men who had the special care of the bridal chamber, and who were therefore his special friends—do not think of fasting while he is with them. With them it is a time of festivity and rejoicing; and mourning would not be appropriate. So, says he, John, your friend and teacher, is in captivity. With you it is a time of deep grief, and it is fit that you should fast. I am with my disciples. It is, with them, a time of joy. It is not fit that they should use the tokens of grief, and fast now.

16 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment; for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse.

A second illustration was drawn from a well-known fact, showing also that there was a propriety or fitness of things. None of you, says he, in mending an old garment, would take a piece of entire new cloth. The word here translated 'new' in the original means rude, undressed, or not fulled or cleansed by the cloth-dresser. In this state, if applied to an old garment, and if wet, it would contract and draw off a part of the garment to which it was attached, and thus make the rent worse than it was. So, says he, my new doctrines do not match with the old rites of the pharisees.

17 Neither do men put new wine into old bottles; else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

The third illustration was taken from wine put into bottles. Bottles, in eastern nations, were made, and are so still, of skins of beasts. Generally the skin was taken entire from a sheep or a goat, and, properly prepared, was filled with wine or water. By long usage, however, they of course became tender, and would be easily rent. New wine, put into them, would ferment, and swell and burst them open. New skins or bottles would be strong enough to hold it from bursting. So, says Christ, there is a fitness or propriety of things. It is not fit that my doctrine

should be attached to, or connected with, the old and corrupt doctrines of the pharisees. New things should be put together, and made to match.

This account of eastern bottles may illustrate the following passages Josh. ix. 4. Job xxxii. 19. Ps. cxix. 83.

18 ¶ While he spake these things unto them, behold, there came a certain ruler, and worshipped him, saying, My daughter is even now dead: but come and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live. 19 And Jesus arose and followed him, and *so did* his disciples.

The account contained in these verses is recorded, with some additional circumstances, in Mark v. 22—43, and Luke viii. 41—56. 'There came a certain ruler.' Mark and Luke say that his name was Jairus, and that he was a ruler of the synagogue; that is, one of the elders to whom was committed the care of the synagogue. See note Matt. iv. 23. 'My daughter is even now dead.' Luke says that this was his only daughter, and that she was twelve years of age. Mark and Luke say that she was at the point of death, and that information of her actual death was brought to him by one who was sent from the ruler's house, while Jesus was going. Matthew combined the two facts, and stated the representation which was made to Jesus, without stopping particularly to exhibit the manner in which it was done. The Greek word rendered 'is even now dead,' does not of necessity mean that she had actually expired, but only that she was dying or about to die. Compare Gen. xlviii. 21. l. 5, 24. It is likely that a father, in these circumstances, would use a word as nearly expressing actual death as would be consistent with the fact that she was alive. The passage may be expressed thus: 'My daughter was so sick that she must be, by this time, dead. 'Come and lay thy hand upon her.' It was customary for the Jewish prophets, in conferring favours, to lay their hand on the person benefited.

20 ¶ And, behold, a woman, which was diseased of an issue of blood twelve years, came behind *him*, and touched the hem of his garment: 21 For she said within herself, If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole. 22 But Jesus turned him about; and when he saw her, he said, Daughter, be of good comfort: thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

'Touched the hem of his garment.' This garment was probably the square garment which was thrown over the shoulders. Note Matt. v. 40. This was surrounded by a border, or fringe; and

this fringe, or loose threads hanging down, is what is meant by the hem. The Jews were commanded to wear this in order to distinguish them from other nations. See Num. xv. 38, 39. Deut. xxii. 12.

Mark says that the woman, fearing and trembling, came and told him all the truth. She might have trembled at the prospect that he might rebuke her for presumption. 'Be of good comfort.' Jesus silenced her fears, commended her faith, and sent her away in peace. Her faith, her strong confidence in Jesus, had been the means of her restoration. It was the power of Jesus that cured her; but that power would not have been exerted but in connection with faith. So in the salvation of a sinner. No one is saved who does not believe; but faith is the instrument, and not the power, that saves.

23 And when Jesus came into the ruler's house and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

Jesus admitted only three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and the father and mother of the damsel, to go in with him where the corpse lay, Mark v. 37—40. It was important that there should be witnesses of the miracle, and he chose a sufficient number. Five witnesses were enough to establish the fact. The witnesses were impartial. The fact that she was dead was established beyond a doubt. Of this the mourners, the parents, the messengers, the people were satisfied. If she was presented to the people alive, the proof of the miracle was complete. 'He saw the minstrels and the people making a noise.' Minstrels are persons who play on instruments of music. The people of the east used to bewail the dead by cutting the flesh, tearing the hair, and crying bitterly. See Jer. ix. 17; xvi. 6, 7. Ezek. xxiv. 17. The expressions of grief at the death of a friend, in eastern countries, are extreme. As soon as a person dies, all the females in the family set up a loud and doleful cry. They continue it as long as they can without taking breath, and the shriek of wailing dies away in a low sob. They hire persons of both sexes, whose employment it is to mourn for the dead in the like frantic manner. See Amos v. 16. Jer. ix. 20. They employ minstrels to aid their grief, and increase the expression of their sorrow. This violent grief continues, commonly, eight days; it is exhibited in the procession to the grave; and the air is rent with the wailings of real and of hired mourners.

The Jews were forbidden to tear their hair and cut their flesh. See Lev. xix. 28. Deut. xiv. 1. They showed their grief by howling, by music, by concealing the chin with their garment, by rending the outer garment, by refusing to wash or anoint themselves, or to converse with people, by scattering ashes or dust in the air, or by lying down in them, 2 Sam. i. 2—4; xiv. 2; xv. 30, Mark xiv. 63.



24 He said unto them, Give place; for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn.

'The maid is not dead but sleepeth.' 'Our friend Lazarus sleepeth,' John xi. 11. The sacred writers, who held the doctrine of the resurrection, often speak of the dead as sleeping, 2 Peter iii. 4. Acts vii. 60. 1 Cor. xv. 6, 18. 1 Thess. iv. 13-15. The meaning of this passage then, is, the maid has not ceased to exist; but though her body is dead, yet her spirit lives, and she sleeps in hope of the resurrection. 'Laughed him to scorn.' Derided him, ridiculed him.

25 But when the people were put forth, he went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose. 26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

'He went in.' With the father and mother, and three disciples, Mark v. 37-40. 'The maid arose.' She returned to life. There could be no deception here. Parents could not be imposed on in such a case. Nor could such a multitude be deceived. The power of Jesus was undoubtedly manifest as sufficient to raise the dead. If he can restore the body to life, he can also the soul. A word from him can raise up the sinner to life and power, and restore the soul to immortal life, so that it shall never see death.

27 ¶ And when Jesus departed thence, two blind men followed him, crying, and saying, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on us.

'Son of David.' By the Son of David the Jews meant the Messiah. He was the son or descendant of David by way of eminence, Isa. ix. 7. Luke i. 32. Matt. i. 1. and Rev. xxii. 16.

28 And when he was come into the house, the blind men came to him: and Jesus saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto him, Yea, Lord. 29 Then touched he their eyes, saying, according to your faith be it unto you. 30 And their eyes were opened: and Jesus straitly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know *it*. 31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad his fame in all that country. 32 ¶ As they went out, behold, they brought to him a dumb man possessed with a devil. 33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitudes marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel. 34 But the pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the prince of the devils.

'Prince of the devils.' That is, Beel-Zebub. See note Matt. xii. 24.

35 And Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

'The gospel of the kingdom.' That is, the good news of the reign of God, or the good news of the advent and reign of the Messiah, Matt. iii. 2.

36 ¶ But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

He saw the people burdened with the rites of religion and the doctrines of the pharisees—sinking down under their ignorance and traditions, and neglected by those who ought to have been enlightened teachers—scattered and driven out without care and attention. With great beauty he compares them to sheep, wandering without a shepherd. Judea was a land of flocks and herds. The faithful shepherd, by day and night, was with his flock. Without his care, they wandered. They were in danger of wild beasts. So, said he, is it with this people. No wonder that the compassionate Redeemer was moved with pity.

37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few; 38 Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

Another beautiful image. By the 'harvest,' here, he meant that the multitude of people that flocked to his ministry was great. The people expected the Messiah. They were prepared to receive the gospel. But the labourers were few. Few were engaged in instructing the multitude. He directed them, therefore, to pray to the Lord of the harvest. God is the proprietor of the great harvest of the world, and he only can send men to gather it in. Without ceasing, we ought to entreat of God to pity the nations, and to send faithful men, who shall tell them of a dying Saviour.

## CHAPTER X.

1 AND when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness, and all manner of disease.

This account of sending the apostles forth is recorded also in

Mark vi. 7, and Luke ix. 1. Mark says that he sent them out two and two. This was a kind arrangement, that each one might have a companion; and that they might visit more places, and accomplish more labour, than if they were all together. These twelve were the original number of apostles. The word apostle means one that is sent, and was given to them because they were sent forth to preach the gospel. They were ambassadors of Christ. To this number Matthias was afterwards added, to supply the place of Judas, Acts i. 26. And Paul was specially called to be an apostle to the Gentiles, Rom. i. 1. 1 Cor. xv. 8, 9. Gal. i. 1.

Their office was clearly made known. They were to heal the sick, raise the dead, preach the gospel, &c. They were to be with him, receive his instructions, learn the nature of his religion, be witnesses of his resurrection, and bear his gospel around the globe. The number twelve was for these purposes sufficiently large to answer the purpose of testimony. They were not learned men, and could not be supposed to spread their religion by art, or talents, or learning. They were not men of wealth, and could not bribe men to follow them. They were not men of rank and office, and could not compel men to believe. They were just such men as are always found the best witnesses in courts of justice—plain men, of good sense, of fair character, of great honesty, and with favourable opportunities of ascertaining the facts to which they bore witness. Such men every body believes, and especially when they are willing to lay down their lives to prove their sincerity.

It was important that he should choose them early in his ministry, that they might be fully acquainted with him. No witnesses were ever so well qualified to give testimony as they; and none ever gave so much evidence of their sincerity as they did. See Acts i. 21, 22.

2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these: the first, Simon, who was called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son of* Zebedee, and John his brother. 3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son of* Alphaeus; and Lebbeus, whose surname was Thaddeus;

The account which follows is more fully given in Mark iii. 13—18, and Luke vi. 12—19. Each of those evangelists has recorded the circumstances of their appointment. They agree in saying it was done on a mountain; and, according to Luke, it was done before the sermon on the mount was delivered. Luke adds that the night previous had been spent in prayer to God. See note on Luke vi. 12. 'Simon, who is called Peter.' Peter means a rock. He was also called Cephas, John i. 42. 1 Cor.

i. 12; iii. 22; xv. 5. Gal. ii. 9. This was a Syro-Chaldaic word, signifying the same as Peter. This name was given probably in reference to the resoluteness and firmness which he was to exhibit in preaching the gospel. Before the Saviour's death he was rash, impetuous, and unstable. Afterwards, as all history affirms, he was firm, zealous, steadfast, and immovable. 'James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother.' This James was slain by Herod in a persecution, Acts xii. 2. The other James, the son of Alphaeus, was stationed at Jerusalem, and was the writer of the epistle that bears his name. See Gal. ii. 9. Acts xv. 13. He is here called the son of Alphaeus, that is, of Cleophas, John xix. 25. Alphaeus and Cleophas were but different ways of writing and pronouncing the same name. 'Lebbeus, called Thaddeus.' These two words have the same signification in Hebrew. Mark and Luke call him Judas, by a slight change from the name Thaddeus. Such changes are common in all writings.

4 Simon the Canaanite; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.

'Simon the Canaanite.' Luke calls him Simon Zelotes, the zealous. His native place was probably Cana. 'Judas Iscariot.' It is probable this name was given to him to designate his native place. Carioth was a small town in the tribe of Judah.

5 These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

'Into the way of the Gentiles.' That is, among the Gentiles, or no where but among the Jews. The full time for preaching the gospel to the former was not come. It was proper that it should be first preached to the Jews, the ancient covenant people of God, and the people among whom the Messiah was born. 'And into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not.' The Samaritans occupied the country formerly belonging to the tribe of Ephraim, and the half tribe of Manassah. That region was situated between Jerusalem and Galilee; so that in passing from the one to the other, it was a direct course to pass through Samaria. The capital of the country was Samaria, formerly a large and splendid city. It is now a small village called Naplose, or Nablous, containing but forty or fifty inhabitants. They are still tenacious of the opinions of their fathers, and still inveterate in their hatred of the Jews. This people was formerly composed of a few of the ten tribes, and a mixture of foreigners. When the ten tribes were carried away into captivity to Babylon, the king of Assyria sent people from Cuthah, Ava, Hamath, and Sepharvaim, to inhabit their country, 2 Kings xvii. 24. Ezra iv. 2-11. These people at first worshipped the idols of their own



nations. But being troubled with lions, which had increased greatly while the country remained uninhabited, they supposed it was because they had not honoured the God of the country. A Jewish priest was therefore sent to them from Babylon, to instruct them in the Jewish religion, but they still retained many of their old rites and idolatrous customs, and embraced a religion made up of Judaism and idolatry, 2 Kings xvii. 26—28.

They obtained leave of the Persian monarch to build a temple for themselves. This was erected on mount Gerizim, and they strenuously contended that that was the place designated by Moses as the place where the nation should worship. Sanballat, the leader of the Samaritans, constituted his son-in-law, Manasses, high priest. The religion of the Samaritans thus became perpetuated, and an irreconcilable hatred arose between them and the Jews. Afterwards Samaria became a place of resort for all the outlaws of Judea. Many Jewish criminals, and refugees from justice, and those excommunicated, betook themselves for safety to Samaria, and greatly increased the hatred which subsisted between the two nations. The Samaritans received only the five books of Moses, and rejected the writings of the prophets, and all the Jewish traditions. From these causes arose an irreconcilable difference between them, so that the Jews regarded them as the worst of the human race, John viii. 48, and had no dealings with them, John iv. 9. Our Saviour, however, preached the gospel to them afterwards, John iv. 6—26, and the apostles imitated his example, Acts viii. 25.

6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

That is, to the Jews. Christ regarded them as wandering and lost, like sheep straying without a shepherd. They had been the chosen people of God; they had long looked for the Messiah; and it was proper that the gospel should be first offered to them.

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ See note, Matt. iii. 2.

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

‘Freely ye have received, freely give.’ That is, they were not to sell their favours of healing, preaching, &c. They were not to make a money making business of it, to bargain to heal for so much, and to cast out devils for so much. This, however, neither then nor afterwards, precluded them from receiving a competent support. See Luke x. 7. 1 Cor. ix. 8—14. 1 Tim. v. 18.

9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses,

'Nor brass.' This prohibition of gold, silver, and brass, is designed to prevent their preparing money for their journey. Pieces of money of small value were made of brass. 'In your purses.' Literally in your girdles. The loose flowing dresses of the Jews required to be girded up, or tied around the body during labour, exercise, running, or even walking. See note, Matt. v. 40. A girdle or sash was therefore an indispensable part of the dress. This girdle was made hollow, and answered the purpose of a purse.

10 Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

'Nor scrip.' That is, knapsack. It was made of skin or coarse cloth, to carry provisions in. It was commonly hung around the neck. 'Neither two coats.' See note, Matt. v. 40. 'Neither shoes.' The original is the word commonly rendered sandals. See note, Matt. iii. 11.

Mark says, in recording this discourse, 'but be shod with sandals.' But there is no difference. According to Matthew, Jesus does not forbid their wearing the sandals, which they probably had on, but only forbids their supplying themselves with more, or with superfluous ones. Instead of making provision for their feet when their present shoes were worn out, they were to trust to Providence to be supplied, and go as they were. 'Nor yet staves.' But Mark says that they might have a staff. They were hereby probably forbidden to provide and carry a second or spare staff, as is not uncommon in the east when persons are upon a journey. 'The workman is worthy of his meat.' They were not to make bargain and sale of the power of working miracles, but they were to expect competent support from preaching the gospel; and that not merely as a gift, but they were worthy of it, and had a right to it.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

'Who in it is worthy.' That is, who in it sustains a fair character, will be able and disposed to show you hospitality, and will treat you kindly. 'And there abide.' There remain; as Luke adds, 'Go not from house to house.' They were to content themselves with one house, not to wander about, not to appear to be men of idleness, and fond of change, or dissatisfied with the hospitality of the people; but to show that they valued their time, and were disposed to give themselves to labour, prayer, and meditation, and to be intent only on the business for which Christ had sent them.

**12 And when ye come into a house, salute it.**

'The word 'house,' here, evidently means family, as it does in the following verse. See also Matt. xii. 25, and John iv. 53. The apostles were directed to salute the family, to show them the customary tokens of respect, and to treat them with civility. Religion never requires or permits its friends to outrage the common rules of intercourse. It demands of them to exhibit to all the proper tokens of respect, according to their age and station, 1 Pet. ii. 12—25; iii. 8—11. Phil. iv. 8. As to the mode of salutation, see note, Luke x. 4, 5.

**13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.**

'If the house be worthy.' That is, if the family be worthy, or be willing to receive you as my disciples. 'Let your peace come upon it.' That is, seek their peace and happiness by prayer, instruction, by remaining with them, and imparting to them, the blessings of the gospel. 'But if it be not worthy,' &c. If the family be unwilling to receive you, and inhospitable; if they show themselves unfriendly to you and your message. 'Let your peace return to you.' This is a Hebrew mode of saying that your peace shall not come upon it, Psal. xxxv. 13. It is a mode of speaking derived from bestowing a gift. If people were willing to receive it, they derived the benefit from it; if not, then of course the present came back, or remained in the hand of the giver. So Christ figuratively speaks of the peace or liberty which their labour would confer.

**14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.**

'Shake off the dust of your feet.' A significant act, denoting that they regarded them as impure, profane, and heathenish, and unworthy of their instruction, and that they declined all further connexion with them. See Acts xiii. 51; xviii. 6.

**15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.**

The cities here mentioned, together with Admah and Zeboim, were destroyed by fire and brimstone on account of their great wickedness. They occupied the place afterwards covered by the Dead Sea, bounding Palestine on the south-east, Gen. xix. 24, 25. Christ says that their punishment will be more tolerable—that is, more easily borne—than that of the people who reject his gospel. The reason is, that they were not favoured with so much light

and instruction. See Matt. xi. 23, 24. Luke xii. 47, 48. Sodom and Gomorrah are often referred to as signal instances of Divine vengeance, and as sure proofs that the wicked shall not go unpunished. See 2 Peter ii. 6. Jude 7.

16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

'As sheep in the midst of wolves.' That is, I send you, innocent and harmless, into a cold, unfriendly, and cruel world. Your innocence will not be a protection. 'Be wise as serpents,' &c. Serpents have been always an emblem of wisdom and cunning, Gen. iii. 1. Christ directed his followers here to imitate the caution of serpents in avoiding danger. No animals equal them in the rapidity and skill which they evince in escaping danger. He directs them also to be harmless, not to provoke danger, not to do injury, and make their fellow men justly enraged against them. Doves are, and always have been, a striking emblem of innocence.

17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

'But beware of men.' That is, be on your guard against men who are like wolves, v. 16. Do not run unnecessarily into danger. Use suitable prudence and caution, and do not unnecessarily endanger your lives. 'Councils.' The judicial tribunals, of which there were some in every town and village. 'They will scourge you in their synagogues.' Scourging or whipping is often mentioned in the New Testament as a part of punishment. The law of Moses directed that the number of stripes should not exceed forty, but might be any number less, at the discretion of the judge, Deut. xxv. 2, 3. The blows were inflicted on the back. The criminal was tied to a low post.

The instrument formerly used was a rod. Afterwards thongs or lashes were employed attached to the rod. The law was express that the number of stripes should not exceed forty. The Jews, to secure the greater accuracy in counting, used a scourge with three lashes, which inflicted three stripes at once. With this the criminal was struck thirteen times, making the number of blows thirty-nine. Paul was five times scourged in this way. See 2 Cor. xi. 24. This was often done in the synagogue. See Matt. xxiii. 34. Acts xxii. 19; xxvi. 11.

18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

This prediction was completely and abundantly fulfilled, Acts



v. 26; xii, 1—4; xxiii, 33; xxv, 23. Peter is said to have been brought before Nero, John before Domitian, Roman emperors; and others before Parthian, Scythian, and Indian kings. They were to be witnesses to them of the great facts and doctrines of the christian religion; and if they rejected christianity, they would be witnesses against them in the day of judgment. The fulfilment of this prophecy is a signal evidence that Christ possessed a knowledge of the future. Few things were more improbable, when this was uttered, than that the fishermen of Galilee should stand before the illustrious and mighty monarchs of the east and the west.

19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. 20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

‘Take no thought.’ That is, be not anxious, or unduly solicitous. See note, Matt. vi. 25. God would inspire them. Poor and ignorant, and obscure fishermen, would naturally be solicitous what they should say before the great men of the earth. How consoling, then, the assurance that God would aid them, and speak within them!

21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

Were there no evidence that this had been done, it would scarcely be credible. The ties which bind brothers and sisters, and parents and children, are so strong, that it would scarcely be believed that division of sentiment on religious subjects should cause them to forget these tender relations. And especially, it shows the exceeding malignity of the human heart against the gospel of Christ, when it can be gratified in no other way than by seeking the death of a parent, or a child! Nothing else but this dreadful opposition to God, and his gospel, ever has induced, or ever can induce men, to violate the most tender relations, and consign the best friends to torture, racks, and flames.

22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

‘Ye shall be hated of all men.’ That is, of all kinds of men. The human heart would be opposed to them, because it is opposed to Christ. ‘But he that endureth to the end,’ &c. That is, to the end of life, be it longer or shorter. He that bears all these unspeakable sufferings, and does not shrink and apostatize, will

give decisive evidence of attachment to me, and shall enter into heaven.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

They were not permitted to throw away their lives. Where they could preserve them without denying their Lord, they were to do it. We are to preserve our lives by all proper means; but rather die, than save ourselves by doing any thing wrong. 'Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel,' &c. That is, in fleeing from persecutors, from one city to another, you shall not have gone to every city in Judea, till the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the Jewish economy. See note on Matt. xxiv. 28—30. By the coming of the Son of man, that is, of Christ, is probably meant the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened about thirty years after this was spoken. The words are often used in this sense. See Matt. xxiv. 30. Mark xiii. 26. Luke xxi. 27—32.

24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his lord. 25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?

'The disciple is not above his Master,' &c. That is, you must expect the same treatment which I have received. See Matt. xii. 24. Luke xi. 15. John viii. 48. 'Beelzebub,' or Beelzebul, was a god of the Ekronites. See 2 Kings i. 2. The word literally means the god of flies, so called because this idol was supposed to protect them from the numerous swarms of flies with which that country abounded. The word also signified, among the Jews, the god of filth, and was esteemed as the lowest and most offensive of all the idol gods. Hence the name was given to the leader, or prince of all the devils, Luke xi. 15. Mark iii. 22. By giving the name to Christ, they poured upon him the greatest possible abuse and contempt.

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

'There is nothing covered,' &c. It is probable that this declaration was a proverb among the Jews. By it our Saviour meant, that their innocence, their principles, and their integrity, though then the world might not acknowledge them, yet, in due time, should be revealed. They were to be willing to be unknown,

despised, persecuted, for a time, with the assurance that their true characters should yet be manifest.

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

'What I say to you in darkness,' &c. That is, in secret, in private, in confidence. The private instructions which I give you while with me, do you proclaim publicly, on the housetop. See note, Matt. ix. 1—8.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

The body is a small matter, in comparison with the soul. Temporal death is a slight thing, compared with eternal death. He directs them therefore not to be alarmed at the prospect of temporal death; but to fear God, who can destroy both soul and body for ever. This passage proves that the bodies of the wicked will be raised up to be punished for ever.

29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. 30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. 31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

'Are not two sparrows,' &c. The argument is, if God take care of birds of the least value; if he regard so small things as the hairs of the head, and number them, he will certainly protect and provide for you. You need not, therefore, fear what man can do to you. 'Sparrows.' Birds of very small kind and value. They were used for food, and were an image of sorrow, solitude, and wretchedness, Ps. cii. 7. 'Farthing.' See note, Matt. v. 26. 'Without your Father.' That is, God your Father guides and directs its fall. It falls only with his permission, and where he chooses. 'The hairs—are numbered.' That is, each one has exercised the care and attention of God. He has fixed the number; and though of small importance, yet he does not think it beneath him to determine how few, or how many, they shall be. He will therefore take care of you.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. 33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

'Whosoever therefore shall confess me,' &c. It means an

acknowledgment of the Lord Jesus Christ, and dependence on him for salvation, and attachment to him, in every proper manner. The scriptures mean, by a profession of religion, an exhibition of it in every circumstance of the life, and before all men. If we are ashamed of Christ, if we deny him before men, or are unwilling to express our attachment to him in every way possible, then it is right that he should disown all connexion with us, or deny us, before God. And he will do it.

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth : I came not to send peace but a sword. 35 For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. 36 And a man's foes *shall be* they of his own household.

See Micah vii. 6. Christ did not here mean to say that the object of his coming was to produce discord and contention ; for he was the Prince of Peace, Isa. ix. 6. Luke ii. 14. But he means to say that such would be the effect of his coming. One part of a family that was opposed to him, would set themselves against those who believed in him. The wickedness of men is the cause of this hostility, and not the religion of the gospel. 'But a sword.' The sword is an instrument of death, and to send a sword, is the same as to produce hostility and war.

37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me : and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

'He that loveth father or mother,' &c. The meaning is clear. Christ must be loved supremely, or he is not loved at all. If we are not willing to give up all earthly possessions, and forsake all earthly friends ; and if we do not obey him rather than all others, we have no true attachment to him. 'Is not worthy of me.' Is not fit to be regarded as a follower of me ; or is not a christian.

38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

When persons were condemned to be crucified, a part of the sentence was that they should carry the cross on which they were to die, to the place of execution. So, to carry the cross is a figurative expression, denoting that we must endure whatever is burdensome, or trying, or considered as disgraceful, in following Christ. It consists simply in doing our duty, let the world think of it, or speak of it as they may. It is doing just what is required of us in the scriptures, let it produce whatever shame, disgrace, or pain it may. This every follower of Jesus is required to do.



39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

The word 'life' in this passage is used evidently in two senses. The meaning may be expressed thus: He that is anxious to save his temporal life, or his comfort and security here, shall lose his eternal life; or shall fail of obtaining heaven. He that is willing to risk, or lose his comfort and life here, for my sake, shall find life everlasting, or shall be saved.

40 ¶ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me. 41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward. 42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, He shall in no wise lose his reward.

In all these three illustrations Christ meant to teach substantially the same thing, that he who would entertain kindly, or treat with hospitality, his disciples, or himself, a prophet, or a righteous man, would show that he approved their character, would show attachment to them, and should not fail of obtaining proper reward. To receive in the name of a prophet, is to receive as a prophet; to do proper honour to his character; and to evince attachment to the cause in which he was engaged. 'These little ones.' By these are meant his disciples. They are called little ones, to denote their want of wealth, rank, learning, and whatever the world calls great. They were little in the estimation of the world, and in their own estimation. They were learners, not yet teachers; and they made no pretensions to what attracts the admiration of mankind. 'A cup of cold water only.' Few would refuse a cup of cold water to any man, if thirsty and weary; and yet few would give it to such an one because he was a christian, or to express attachment to the Lord Jesus. In bestowing it on a man because he was a christian, he would show love to the Saviour himself; in the other case, he would give it from mere sympathy or kindness. In one case, he would show that he loved the cause of religion; in the other, not. What more easy than to give a cup of water to a stranger; and what more easy than to know from what motive we do it. Yet how many are there who, while they would do the thing, would yet lose eternal life, rather than do it with a view of honouring Christ, or showing attachment to him. How dreadful is the opposition of the human heart to religion!

## CHAPTER XI.

1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. 2 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of Christ, he sent two of his disciples,

The account contained in this chapter of Matthew, to the 19th verse, is found, with no material variation, in Luke vii. 18—35. John was in prison. Herod had thrown him into confinement, on account of John's faithfulness in reproving him for marrying his brother Philip's wife. See Matt. xiv. 3, 4.

3 And said unto him, Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?

That is, art thou the Messiah, or the Christ. The Jews expected a Saviour. His coming had been long foretold, Gen. xlix. 10. Isa. xxxv. 4. Dan. ix. 24. John vi. 14. In common language therefore he was described as He that was to come. Luke adds here, Luke vii. 21, that at the time when the messengers came to him, Jesus cured many persons of their infirmities, and plagues, and of evil spirits. An answer was therefore ready to the inquiries of John's disciples.

4 Jesus answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: 5 The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.

Jesus referred them for an answer to these miracles. No prophet had wrought so many, or so important. Jesus, moreover, wrought them in his own name, and by his own power. Prophets had done it by the power of God. Jesus therefore performed the works which none but the Messiah could do; and John's disciples might easily infer that he was the Christ. 'The poor have the gospel preached to them.' It was predicted of the Messiah, that he would preach good tidings to the meek, Isa lxi. 1; or as it is rendered in the New Testament, preach the gospel to the poor, Luke iv. 18. It adds to the force of this testimony, that the poor have always been overlooked by pharisees and philosophers. No sect of philosophers had condescended to notice them before Christ; and no system of religion had attempted to instruct them, before the christian religion.

6 And blessed is *he*, whosoever shall not be offended in me.

See note Matt. v. 29. This verse might be rendered 'happy is he to whom I shall not prove a stumbling-block!' That is, happy is he who shall not take offence at my poverty and lowliness of life, so as to reject me and my doctrine. Happy is he who can, notwithstanding that poverty and obscurity, see the evidence that I am the Messiah, and follow me.

7 ¶ And as they departed, Jesus began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

Jesus took occasion from the inquiries made by John's disciples, to instruct the people respecting the true character of John. It is probable that many had been attracted by the novelty of his appearance or doctrines. He took occasion therefore by some striking questions to examine the motives by which they had been drawn to his ministry. 'A reed shaken with the wind?' An image of a light, changing, inconstant man. John's sending his disciples to Christ, to inquire his character, might have led some to suppose that he was changing and inconstant. He had once acknowledged him to be the Messiah. Jesus, by asking this question, declared, that this was not the character of John.

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in kings' houses.

The kind of raiment here denoted was the light, thin clothing worn by effeminate persons. This kind of clothing was an emblem of riches, splendour, effeminacy, and feebleness of character. He meant to say that John was a man of a different stamp; coarse in his exterior; hardy in his character; firm in his virtue; fitted to endure trials and privations, and thus qualified to be the forerunner of the toiling and suffering Messiah.

9 But what went ye out for to see? A prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a prophet.

'A prophet?' They had regarded him as such; and Jesus tells them that in this their apprehensions of him were correct. 'More than a prophet.' Sustaining a character more elevated and sacred than the most distinguished of the ancient prophets. He lived in the time of the Christ. He predicted his coming with more clearness than even Isaiah himself. He was the instrument of introducing him to the nation. He was therefore first among the prophets.

10 For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee.

'For this is he,' &c. See Matt. iii. 1. Isa. xl. 3. 'Prepare thy way.' That is, Prepare the people and make them ready, by proper instructions, to receive the Messiah.

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.

'Them that are born of women.' This is an emphatic way of saying that there had never been a greater man than John. See Job xiv. 1. 'He that is least in the kingdom of heaven, is greater than he.' Of the apostles of the Saviour, of the first preachers, who were with him, who heard his instructions, it might be said, that they had more correct apprehensions than any of the ancient prophets, or John.

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force,

'And from the days of John,' &c. That is, from the days when John began to preach. See Matt. iii. 5. So, says he, it has continued. Since the kingdom of heaven, or the gospel, has been preached, there has been a rush to it. Men have been earnest about it; they have come pressing to obtain the blessing, as if they would take it by force. There is allusion here to the manner in which cities were taken. Besiegers pressed upon them with violence, and demolished the walls, and captured them. With such earnestness and violence, he says, men had pressed around him and John, since they began to preach.

13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

John introduced a new dispensation. By 'the law' is meant the five books of Moses; by 'the prophets,' the remainder of the books of the Old Testament.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come.

'If ye will receive it.' Implying that the doctrine which he was about to state was different from their common views; and therefore, they might be disposed to reject it. 'This is Elias,' &c. That is, Elijah. Elias is the Greek mode of writing the Hebrew word Elijah. The prophet Malachi, ch. iv. 5, 6, predicted that Elijah should be sent before the coming of the Messiah, to prepare the way for him. By this was evidently meant, not that he should appear in person, but that one should appear with a striking resemblance to him; or, as Luke, ch. i. 17, expresses it, 'in the spirit and power of Elijah.' But the Jews expected that



Elijah would appear in person. They also supposed that Jeremiah and some other of the prophets would appear to usher in the promised Messiah, and to grace his advent. See Matt. xvi. 14; xvii. 10. John i. 21.

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

This expression is frequently used by Christ. It is a proverbial expression, implying that the highest attention should be given to what was spoken.

16 ¶ But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, 17 And saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; We have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented. 18 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. 19 The Son of man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But wisdom is justified of her children.

Christ proceeds to reprove the inconsistency and fickleness of that age of men. He says they were like children. Nothing pleased them long. He refers here to the plays or sports of children. Instrumental music, or piping, and dancing, were used in marriages and festivals, as a sign of joy, Luke xv. 25. Children imitate their parents and others, and act over in play what they see done by them. Among their childish sports, therefore, was probably an imitation of a wedding, or festal occasion. We have seen also, note Matt. ix. 23, that funerals were attended with mournful music, and lamentation, and howling. It is not improbable that children also, in play, imitated a mournful funeral procession. One part are represented as sullen and dissatisfied. They would not enter into the play. The others complained of it. We have, said they, taken all pains to please you. We have piped to you, played cheerful and lively tunes, and sports, but you would not join with us; and then we have played different games, and imitated the mourning at funerals, and you are equally sullen. Nothing pleases you. So, said Christ, is this generation of men. John came one way; and you were not pleased with him. I, the Son of man, have come in a different manner, and you are equally dissatisfied. Nay, you are less pleased. You calumniate him, and yet abuse me for not doing the very thing which displeased you in John. You are fickle, changeable, and inconstant. 'Markets.' Places of concourse. 'Neither eating nor drinking.' That is, abstaining from some kinds of food, and wine, as a Nazarene. He was remarkable for abstinence. He hath a devil.' He is actuated by a

bad spirit. 'The Son of man came eating and drinking.' That is, living as others do; not practising austerity. 'Gluttonous.' One given to excessive eating. 'Wine-bibber.' One who drinks much wine. A great drinker. 'Wisdom is justified of her children.' The children of wisdom are the wise; those who understand. He means that though pharisees and fault-finders did not appreciate the conduct of John and himself, yet the wise, those who understood the reason of their conduct—would approve of it.

20 ¶ Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not;

'To upbraid,' That is, to reprove, rebuke, or to denounce heavy judgment.

21 Wo unto thee, Chorazin! wo unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

'Chorazin' and 'Bethsaida.' Towns not far from Capernaum. Bethsaida was the residence of Philip, Andrew, and Peter, John i. 44. 'Tyre and Sidon.' Cities of Phœnicia, formerly very wealthy, and distinguished for merchandise. They were situated on the shore of the Mediterranean sea, and were on the western part of Judea. 'In sackcloth and ashes.' Sackcloth was a coarse cloth, like canvass, used for the dress of the poor, and for the more common articles of domestic economy. It was worn also as a sign of mourning. The Jews also frequently threw ashes on their heads, as expressive of grief, Job ii. 12. Jer. vi. 26. The meaning is, that they would have repented with expressions of deep sorrow.

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.

'And thou Capernaum.' See note Matt. iv. 13. 'Which art exalted to heaven.' This expression denotes great privileges. The city was signally favoured by the presence, the preaching, and the miracles of the Lord Jesus Christ. Here he spent a large part of his time in the early part of his ministry; and in Caper-

naum and its neighbourhood he performed most of his miracles. 'Shalt be brought down to hell.' The word 'hell' is used here to denote a state of desolation and destruction as a city. Their privileges, honours, wealth, &c., should be taken away, and they should sink as low among cities as they had before been exalted. This has been strictly fulfilled. In the wars between the Jews and the Romans, Chorazin, Bethsaida, Capernaum, &c., were so completely desolated that it is difficult to determine their former situation. Christ also threatened future punishment on those who rejected him. The truth inculcated is, that those who are peculiarly favoured, must be punished accordingly, if they abuse their privileges. 'If the mighty works—had been done in Sodom.' See note Matt. x. 15. It would be better for Sodom in the day of judgment than for Capernaum, for its inhabitants would not be called to answer for the abuse of so great privileges.

25 ¶ At that time Jesus answered and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. 26 Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight.

'From the wise and prudent.' That is, from those who thought themselves wise—wise, according to the world's estimate of wisdom—the men of philosophy, and self-conceit, and science, falsely so called, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. 'Hast revealed them unto babes.' To the poor, ignorant, and obscure; the teachable, simple, and humble. Such were his disciples. He had reference here probably to the proud and haughty scribes and pharisees in Capernaum. They rejected his gospel; but it was the pleasure of God to reveal it to obscure and more humble men. The reason given, the only satisfactory reason, is, that it so seemed good in the sight of God. In this the Saviour acquiesced—'even so Father.'

27 All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and *he* to whomsoever the Son will reveal *him*.

'All things are delivered.' The same doctrine is clearly taught often in the New Testament. See John iii. 35. Col. i. 16, 17. Christ has control over all things for the good of his church; the government of the universe is committed to him as a Mediator, that he may redeem his people and guide them to glory, Eph. i. 20—22. 'No man knoweth the Son.' That is, such is the nature of the Son of God; such the mystery of the union between the Divine and human nature; such his exalted character as Divine, that no mortal can fully comprehend him.

None but God fully knows him. 'Neither knoweth any man the Father,' &c. That is, no one, man or angel, clearly understands or comprehends the character of the infinite God, but the Son, the Lord Jesus, and he to whom he makes him known. This he does by revealing the character of God clearly, and more especially as a sin-forgiving God, John xvii. 6.

28 ¶ Come unto me, all *ye* that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

'All ye that labour and are heavy laden.' He here addresses the poor, lost, ruined sinner: the man burdened with a consciousness of his transgressions, trembling at his danger, and seeking deliverance. For such, there is relief. Christ tells them to come to him. To believe in him, and to trust in him, and in him only, for salvation. Doing this he will give them rest: rest from their sins; from the clamours of conscience; from the terrors of the law; and from the fears of eternal death.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

'Take my yoke.' This is a figure taken from the use of oxen; and hence signifying to labour for any one. It means, here, to take his precepts, and embrace his system of religion, and to obey him. 'For I am meek,' &c. See note, Matt. v. 5. That is he was not harsh, overbearing, and oppressive, like the pharisees, but meek, mild, kind, and gentle in his government. His laws were reasonable and tender; and it would be easy to obey him.

30 For my yoke *is* easy, and my burden is light.

'My yoke is easy,' &c. That is, the services that I shall require are reasonable, and easily rendered. They are not burdensome, like all other systems of religion. So the christian always finds them. In coming to Christ, there is a peace which passeth all understanding; in following him through evil and good report, a comfort which the world giveth not; in bearing trials, and in persecution, the hope of glory; and in keeping his commandments, great reward. The poor and needy; the weary and heavy laden; the soul sick of sin, and of the world, conscious of guilt, and afraid to die, may come to Jesus Christ. The invitation is wide as the world. The child and the old man may seek and find salvation at the feet of the same Saviour. Christ is full of mercy, and all who come shall find peace. O how should we, in this sinful and miserable world, borne down with sin, and exposed each moment to death, how should we come and find the peace which he has promised to all, and take the yoke which all believers have found to be light!



## CHAPTER XII.

1 AT that time Jesus went on the sabbath day through the corn ; and his disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat.

The account contained in these verses is also recorded in Mark ii. 23—28, and Luke vi. 1—5. 'At that time,' Luke fixes the date more particularly. It was during the Passover, and consequently about the beginning of April. See note on Luke vi. 5. In Judea the barley harvest commences about the beginning of May, and that harvest and the wheat harvest are over by the 20th. Barley is in full ear in the beginning of April. 'Through the corn,' Through the barley or wheat. This explains the circumstance that they 'rubbed it in their hands,' Luke vi. 1, to separate the grain from the chaff.

2 But when the pharisees saw *it*, they said unto him, Behold, thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the sabbath day.

'Upon the sabbath day.' The pharisees, desirous of finding fault with Christ, said that in plucking the grain on the 'sabbath day,' they had violated the commandment. Moses had commanded to abstain from all servile work on the sabbath. *Exod. xx. 10; xxxv. 2, 3. Num. xv. 32—36.* On any other day this would have been clearly lawful, for it was permitted, *Deut. xxiii. 25.*

3 But he said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him ;

The law commanded that twelve loaves of bread should be laid on the table in the holy place, to remain a week, and then to be eaten by the priests only. Their place was supplied then by fresh bread. This was called the shew-bread. *Lev. xxiv. 5—9.* David, fleeing before Saul, weary and hungry, had come to Abimelech the priest : had found only this bread ; had asked it of him, and had eaten it, contrary to the letter of the law. *1 Sam. xxi. 1—7.* This act had passed uncondemned. It proved that in cases of necessity the laws did not bind a man : a principle which all laws admit. So the necessity of the disciples justified them in doing on the sabbath what would have been otherwise unlawful.

4 How he entered into the house of God, and did eat the shewbread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the priests? 5 Or have ye not read in the law, how that

on the sabbath days the priests in the temple profane the sabbath, and are blameless?

'House of God.' That was the tabernacle, the temple not being then built. 'Profane the sabbath.' On the sabbath days they were engaged, as well as on other days, in killing beasts for sacrifice, Num. xxviii. 9, 10. Two lambs were killed on the sabbath, in addition to the daily sacrifice. The priests must slay them; skin them, prepare them for sacrifice, and burn them. They did that which, for other persons to do, would have been profaning the sabbath. Yet they were blameless. They did what was necessary and commanded.

6 But I say unto you, That in this place is *one* greater than the temple.

Here he refers to himself, and to his own dignity and power. I have power over the laws: I can grant to my disciples a dispensation from the Jewish laws. An act which I command or permit them to do, is therefore right. This proves that he was Divine.

7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless. 8 For the Son of man is Lord even of the sabbath day.

Christ says that he was Lord of the sabbath. He had a right to direct the manner of its observance—an undoubted proof that he was Divine.

9 And when he was departed thence, he went into their synagogue: 10 ¶ And behold there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked him, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the sabbath days? that they might accuse him.

The account contained in these verses is recorded also in Mark iii. 1—5, and Luke vi. 6—10. 'A man which had his hand withered.' This was probably one form of the palsy. See note, Matt. iv. 24.

Mark and Luke have mentioned some circumstances omitted by Matthew. They say that Jesus told him to stand forth in the midst. He then addressed the people. He asked them if it was lawful to do good on the sabbath day. This was admitted by all their teachers, and it could not be denied. They were therefore silent. He then appealed to them, and drew an argument from their own conduct. If a man would save the life of a sheep, was it not proper to save the life of a man? By a reference to their own conduct, he silenced them.

11 And he said unto them, What man shall there be

among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift it out? 12 How much then is a man better than a sheep? wherefore it is lawful to do well on the sabbath days.

‘A man better than a sheep.’ Of more consequence, or value. If you would show an act of kindness to a brute beast on the sabbath, how much more important is it to evince similar kindness to one made in the image of God: one for whom the Saviour came to die, and who may be raised up to everlasting life. ‘It is lawful to do well.’ This was universally allowed by the Jews in the abstract; and Jesus showed them that the principle on which they acted in other things applied with more force to the case before him, and that the act which he was about to perform was, by their own confession, lawful.

13 Then saith he to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

‘Stretch forth thine hand.’ This was a remarkable commandment. The man might have said that he had no strength; that it was a thing which he could not do. Yet, being commanded, it was his duty to obey. He did so, and was healed. So the sinner. It is his duty to obey whatever God commands. He will give strength to those who attempt to do his will. It is not right to plead, when God commands us to do a thing, that we have no strength. God will give us strength, if there is a disposition to obey. ‘It was restored whole.’ Christ had before claimed Divine authority and power, ver. 6, 9. He now showed that he possessed it. By his own power he healed him; thus evincing by a miracle that his claim of being Lord of the sabbath was well founded.

These two cases determine what may be done on the sabbath. The one was a case of necessity; the other of mercy. The example of the Saviour, and his explanations, show that these are a part of the proper duties of that holy day. Beyond an honest and conscientious discharge of these two duties, men may not devote the sabbath to any secular purpose. If they do, they do it at their peril.

14 Then the pharisees went out, and held a council against him, how they might destroy him.

This account is found also in Mark iii. 6—12. ‘The pharisees—held a council,’ &c. Mark adds, that the Herodians also took a part in this plot. They were probably a political party attached firmly to Herod. The attempt against him now was the effect of envy. They were enraged also that he had foiled them in the

argument; they were losing their influence; and they, therefore, resolved to take him out of the way.

15 But when Jesus knew *it*, he withdrew himself from thence: and great multitudes followed him, and he healed them all;

‘Jesus—withdrew himself,’ &c. He knew the design against his life. He knew that his hour was not yet come; and he therefore sought security. By remaining, his presence would only have provoked them further, and endangered his own life.

Mark adds, that he withdrew to the sea; that is, to the sea of Galilee, or Tiberias. Pressed by the crowd, Mark iii. 9, he went on board a small vessel, or boat, called by Mark a ship. This he did for the convenience of being separated from them, and more easily addressing them. We are to suppose the lake still and calm; the multitudes, many of whom were sick and diseased, standing on the shore, and pressing to the water’s edge; and Jesus thus healing their diseases, and preaching to them the good news of salvation.

16 And charged them that they should not make him known:

He was, at this time, desirous of concealment. He wished to avoid their plots, and to save his life.

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, 18 Behold my servant, whom I have chosen; my beloved, in whom my soul is well pleased: I will put my Spirit upon him, and he shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

Matthew here quotes a passage from Isa. xlii. 1—4, to show the reason why he thus retired from his enemies and sought concealment. The Jews expected that the Messiah would be a conqueror, and vindicate himself from all his enemies. When they saw him retiring before them, and seeking a place of concealment, it was contrary to all their previous notions of the Messiah. Matthew, by this quotation, shows that their conceptions of him had been wrong, and that he was predicted under a totally different character. Instead of shouting for battle, lifting up his voice in the streets, oppressing the feeble as a conqueror—he would be peaceful, retiring, strengthening the feeble, and cherishing the faintest desires of holiness.

‘My servant.’ That is, the Messiah, the Lord Jesus, called a servant from his taking the form of a servant, or his being born in a humble condition, Phil. ii. 7, and from his obeying or serving God. See Heb. x. 9. ‘Shall show judgment to the Gentiles.’



The word 'judgment' means, in the Hebrew, law, commands, &c. Ps. xix. 9; cxix. 29, 30. It means the whole system of truth; the law of God in general; the purpose, plan, or judgment of God, about human duty and conduct.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear his voice in the streets.

'He shall not strive,' &c. He shall not shout, as a warrior. He shall be meek, and peaceful. Streets were places of concourse, public places. The meaning is, that he should not seek publicity, and noise, and popularity.

20 A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench, till he send forth judgment unto victory.

'A bruised reed,' &c. It is an expressive emblem of the soul, broken and contrite on account of sin, weeping and mourning for transgression. He will not break it. That is, he will not be haughty, unforgiving, and cruel. He will heal it, pardon it, and give it strength. 'Smoking flax.' This refers to the wick of a lamp when the oil is exhausted—the dying, flickering flame and smoke that hang over it. It is expressive of the languishing graces of the people of God. He will not treat them harshly or unkindly, but will cherish the feeble flame, minister the oil of grace, and kindle it into a blaze. 'Till he send forth judgment unto victory.' 'Judgment' here means truth, the truth of God, the gospel. It shall be victorious. It shall not be vanquished. Though not such a conqueror as the Jews expected, yet he shall conquer. Though mild and retiring, yet his scheme shall be victorious.

21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

'And in his name,' &c. The Hebrew in Isaiah is, 'And the isles shall wait for his law.' The idea is, however, the same. The isles denote the Gentiles, or a part of the Gentiles—those out of Judea. The meaning is, that the gospel should be preached to the Gentiles, and that they should receive it.

22 ¶ Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

'One possessed with a devil.' See note, Matt. iv. 24. The same account, substantially, is found Mark iii. 22—27, and Luke xi. 14—26.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David?

That is, is not this the promised descendant of David, the

Messiah? They were acquainted with the prophecy in Isaiah xxxv. 5, and they inferred that this must be the promised Messiah. This inference was drawn by the common people, and not by the proud and haughty pharisees. It is not uncommon that the plain common sense of the candid, but unlearned, sees the true beauty and meaning of the bible, while men, filled with pride and science, foolishly so called, are blinded.

24 But when the pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.

Here was a manifest miracle, an exertion of power unquestionably superior to what men could do. The common people were fast coming into the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, and the authority and power of the pharisees were declining. Unless, therefore, some way should be devised of accounting for these facts, their influence would be at an end. But it was necessary that they should acknowledge that there was superhuman power. The people were fully persuaded of this; and no man could deny it. They therefore ascribed it to the prince of the devils—to Beelzebub. In this they had two objects: 1. To concede to the people that here was a miracle, or a work above mere human power. 2. To throw all possible contempt on Jesus. Beelzebub was an opprobrious name, given to the worst and vilest even of the devils. See Matt. x. 25.

25 And Jesus knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand: 26 And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand?

'And Jesus knew their thoughts,' &c. To know the thoughts of the heart belongs only to God, Ps. cxxxix. 2. Jer. xvii. 10. 'Every kingdom,' &c. Jesus made their argument recoil on their own heads. A kingdom, or a family, can prosper only by living in harmony. If divided—if one part undoes what the other does—it must fall. So with the kingdom of Satan. You believe that Satan has possessed those whom I have cured, and that he has helped me to cure them. If so, then he has helped me to undo what he had done—that is, to oppose and discomfit himself. At this rate, how can there be any stability to his kingdom? It must fall; and Satan must have less than human prudence.

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.

'By whom do your children,' &c. Your disciples, taught by you, and encouraged by you, pretend to cast out devils. If your argument be true that a man who casts out devils must be in league with the devil, then your disciples have made a covenant with him also. You must therefore admit that the working of miracles is proof of the assistance of God.

The words of Christ, here, do not prove that they had actually the power of casting out devils, but only that they claimed it, and practised magic, or jugglery. See Acts xix. 13. 'Your children.' Your disciples, or followers. 'They shall be your judges.' They shall condemn you and your argument.

28 But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

'By the Spirit of God,' means the power of God—in Luke, 'by the finger of God.' Compare Ex. viii. 19. Ps. viii. 3. The reign of Satan over men, and the reign of God, are in opposition. If God expels Satan from his dominion over men, then his reign has come. He has set up his kingdom.

29 Or else, how can one enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the strong man? and then he will spoil his house.

A man could not break into the house of a strong man, and take his property, unless he had rendered the man himself helpless. If he had taken his goods, it would therefore be sufficient proof that he had bound the man. So I, says he, have taken this property—this possessed person—from the dominion of Satan. It is clear proof that I have subdued Satan himself, the strong being that had him in possession. 'Spoil his goods.' The word 'spoil,' means here to plunder, to take with violence, as it commonly does in the bible. See Col. ii. 8, 15.

30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

There could be but two parties in the universe; there was no neutral ground. If any one did not act with our Lord, he was against him. If he gathered not with him he scattered. He that did not gather with him, or aid him, scattered abroad, or opposed him. The application of this was, as I have not united with Satan, but opposed him, there can be no league between us.

31 ¶ Wherefore I say unto you, all manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men: but the blasphemy *against* the *Holy* Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men. 32 And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not

be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world to come*.

In this place, and in Mark iii. 23—30, Jesus proceeds to state the awful nature of the sin of which they had been guilty. That sin was the sin against the Holy Ghost. It consisted in charging Jesus with being in league with the devil, or in accusing him of working his miracles, not by the Spirit or power of God, but by the aid of the prince of the devils. It was therefore a direct insult, abuse, evil speaking against the Holy Ghost—the Spirit by whom Jesus worked his miracles. That this was what he intended by this sin, at that time, is clear from Mark iii. 30, ‘*Because they said he had an unclean spirit.*’ All other sins—all speaking against the Saviour himself—might be remitted. But this sin was clearly against the Holy One; it was alleging that the highest displays of God’s mercy and power were the work of the devil; it argued, therefore, the highest depravity of mind. The sin of which he speaks is, then, clearly stated. It was accusing him of working miracles by the aid of the devil—thus dishonouring the Holy Ghost. ‘All manner of sin—shall be forgiven.’ Men repent and believe. If they continue in this sin they cannot be forgiven, Mark xvi. 16. Rom. ii. 6—9. ‘Blasphemy.’ Injurious or evil speaking of God. See note, Matt. ix. 3. ‘A word against the Son of man.’ The Jews were offended at the humble life and appearance of the Saviour. Jesus says, that reflections on his poverty, humble birth, and the lowliness of his human nature might be forgiven. ‘Neither in this world, nor in that which is to come.’ That is, as Mark expresses it, hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation. It means, then, that the guilt will be unpardoned for ever; that God will not forgive a sin so direct, presumptuous, and awful. It cannot be inferred from this that any sins will be forgiven in hell. He meant to say that there were no possible circumstances in which the offender could find forgiveness.

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit:

You are to judge of a man’s being in league with Satan by his works. If my doctrines and works be properly the works of Satan, then I am corrupt: if not, then your charge is blasphemy. So, on the other hand, if, notwithstanding your professions, your works are the works of the devil, and your doctrines be such as he would teach, it would prove, respecting you, that which you charge on me.

34 O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh. 35 A good man, out of the



good treasure of the heart, bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

'O generation of vipers!' Christ here applies the argument which he had suggested in the previous verse. They were a wicked race; like poisonous reptiles, with a corrupt and evil nature. As the bad fruit of a tree was the proper effect of its nature, so were their words about him and his works the effect of their nature. Vipers are a poisonous kind of serpents. They are emblems of malignity and mischief. These expressions were not the effect of anger and malice; they were a declaration of the true character of the men with whom he was conversing.

36 But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.

'Idle word.' This literally means a vain, thoughtless, useless word, that accomplishes no good. Here it means, evidently, wicked, false and malicious; for such were the words which the pharisees had spoken.

37 For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

That is, words shall be the indication of the true principles of the heart; by words the heart shall be known, as the tree by the fruit. If false, envious, malignant, and impious, they will prove that the heart is wrong, and will therefore be among the causes of condemnation. See James iii. 3—12.

38 ¶ Then certain of the scribes and of the pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee.

'We would see a sign from thee.' See Luke xi. 16, 29—32. A 'sign' signifies a miracle—that is, a sign that God was with the person, or had sent him. Luke adds, that this was done tempting him—trying him, doubting if he had the power to do it. Perhaps they referred in this to Moses. He had been with God amidst thunders and lightnings; and he had given them manna—bread from heaven—to eat. They wished Jesus to show some miracle equally undoubted.

39 But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

'An evil and adulterous generation.' The relation of the Jews to God was often represented as a marriage contract; God as the husband, and the Jewish people as the wife. See Isa. lvii. 3. Hos. iii. 1. Ezek. xvi. 15. Hence their apostasy and idolatry are often represented as adultery. They were evil, and unfaithful to the covenant, or to the commandments of God—an apostate and corrupt people. 'There shall no sign be given to it,' &c. He would give no such miracle as they required. He would give one that ought to be as satisfactory evidence to them that he was from God, as the miraculous preservation of Jonah was to the Ninevites that he was divinely commissioned. As Jonah was preserved three days by miracle, and then miraculously restored alive, so he would be raised from the dead after three days. 'The sign of the prophet Jonas,' means the sign or evidence which was given to the people of Nineveh that he was from God—to wit, that he had been miraculously preserved, and was therefore divinely commissioned. The word 'Jonas' is the Greek way of writing the Hebrew word Jonah, as Elias is for Elijah.

40 For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

This event took place in the Mediterranean sea. The fish in the book of Jonah is described merely as a great fish, without specifying the kind. The Greek word translated whale, in the New Testament, may denote a large fish of any kind.

'Three days and three nights.' See Jonah i. 17. Christ was in the grave but two nights and a part of three days. See Matt. xxviii. 6. This computation is, however, strictly in accordance with the Jewish mode of reckoning, that a part of a day was to be received as a whole. Many instances of this kind occur in both sacred and common history. See 2 Chron. x. 5—12. Gen. xlii. 17, 18. Compare Esther iv. 16 with v. 1. 'In the heart of the earth.' The Jews used the word 'heart' to denote the interior of a thing. It means here, to be in the grave or sepulchre.

41 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas; and, behold, a greater than Jonas is here.

Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian empire: It was a city of vast extent. It contained in the time of Jonah, it is supposed, 600,000 inhabitants. The destruction of Nineveh, threatened by Jonah in forty days, was suspended, upon their repentance, 200 years. It was then overthrown by the Babylonians, about 600 years before Christ. 'Shall condemn it.' They, ignorant and wicked heathen, repented when threatened with temporal judgment by a mere man, Jonah; you, Jews, professing to be en-

lightened, and threatened for your great wickedness with eternal punishment by the Son of God, a far greater being than Jonah, repent not, and must therefore meet with a far heavier condemnation.

42 The queen of the south shall rise up in the judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a greater than Solomon *is* here.

'The queen of the south.' That is, the queen of Sheba, 1 Kings x. 1. Sheba was probably a city of Arabia, situated to the south of Judea. 'From the uttermost parts of the earth.' This means simply from the most distant parts of the habitable world then known. See a similar expression in Deut. xxviii. 49. She would condemn that generation, for she came a great distance to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and the Jews of that age would not listen to the wisdom of one much greater than Solomon, though present with them.

43 When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

'When the unclean spirit,' &c. The Jews had asked a sign from heaven that should decisively prove that he was the Messiah, and satisfy their unbelief. He replies that though he should give them such a sign—a proof conclusive and satisfactory; and though for a time they should profess to believe, and apparently reform, yet such was the obstinacy of their unbelief and wickedness, that they would soon return to them, and become worse and worse. Infidelity and wickedness, like an evil spirit in a possessed man, were appropriately at home in them. If driven out, they would find no other place so fit, and comfortable, and undisturbed, as their bosoms. They would return therefore and dwell with them. 'He walketh through dry places.' That is, through deserts—regions of country unwatered, sandy, barren, desolate. Our Saviour here speaks according to the ancient opinions of the Jews, that evil spirits had their abodes in those desolate uninhabited regions. See Rev. xviii. 2. 'Seeking rest, and findeth none.' Those desolate and dry regions are represented as uncomfortable habitations: so much so, that the dissatisfied spirit, better pleased with a dwelling in the bosoms of men, as affording an opportunity of doing evil, seeks a return there.

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

'Then he saith, I will return into my house,' &c. The man is called his house, because he had been the place where the spirit had dwelt. 'He findeth it empty,' &c. By the absence of the evil spirit, the house is represented as unoccupied, or empty. 'Swept and garnished.' That is, while the evil spirit was away, the man was restored to his right mind, was freed from his wicked influence. 'Garnished.' Adorned, put in order, furnished. Applied to the man, it means that his mind was restored when the evil spirit was gone; or, he had a lucid interval.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there: and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

'Then he goeth,' &c. Seeing the state of the man, envious of the happiness of the individual, and supremely bent on evil, he resolved to increase his malignant influences, and return. Seven was a favourite number with the Jews, and was used to denote completeness or perfection, or any finished or complete number. See 1 Sam ii. 5. Here it means a sufficient number completely to occupy and harass the soul. 'Even so shall it be with this generation.' This shows the scope and design of this illustration. The state of that man was a representation of that generation of men. Much might be done to cure their unbelief—much to reform them externally—but such was the firm hold which the principles of infidelity and wickedness had taken of their minds as their proper habitation, that they would return, after all the means used to reform them, and the people would be worse and worse. And this was literally accomplished. After all the instructions and miracles of the Saviour and his apostles; after all that had been done for them by holy men and prophets, and by the judgments and mercies of God; and after all their external temporary reformation, yet such was their love of wickedness, that the nation became worse and worse. They increased in crime, they rejected God's messengers, abused his mercies, crucified his Son, and God gave them, and their temple, and capital, and nation, into the hands of the Romans, and thousands of the people were destroyed.

46 ¶ While he yet talked to the people, behold, *his* mother and his brethren stood without, desiring to speak with him. 47 Then one said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to speak with thee.

See also Mark iii. 31—35. Luke viii. 19—21. 'His brethren.' The children of Mary his mother. See also Mark vi. 3.



48 But he answered and said unto him that told him, Who is my mother? and who are my brethren? 49 And he stretched forth his hand towards his disciples, and said, Behold my mother and my brethren! 50 For whosoever shall do the will of my Father which is in heaven, the same is my brother, and sister, and mother.

'Who is my mother?' &c. There was no want of affection or respect in Jesus towards his mother, as is proved by his whole life. See especially Luke ii. 51, and John xix. 25—27. This question was asked merely to fix the attention of the hearers, and to prepare them for the answer—that is, to show them who sustained towards him the nearest and most tender relation. Dear and tender as were the ties which bound him to his mother and brethren, yet those which bound him to his disciples were more tender and sacred. How great was his love! And what a bright illustration of his own doctrine, that we ought to forsake father, and mother, and friends, and houses, and lands, to be his followers! He will always love them. His heart is full of affection for them. And though poor, and despised, and unknown to the rich and mighty, yet to Jesus they are still dearer than mother, and sisters, and brothers.

## CHAPTER XIII

1 THE same day went Jesus out of the house, and sat by the seaside. 2 And great multitudes were gathered together unto him, so that he went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

'The seaside.' This was the sea of Tiberias.

3 And he spake many things unto them in parables, saying, Behold, a sower went forth to sow;

'In parables.' The word 'parable' is derived from a Greek word, signifying to compare together, and denotes a similitude taken from a natural object, to illustrate a spiritual or moral subject. It is a narrative of some fictitious or real event, in order to illustrate more clearly some truth that the speaker wished to communicate. Heathen writers often employed it. In the time of Christ it was in common use; the prophets had used it, and Christ employed it often in teaching his disciples. It is not necessary to suppose that the narratives were strictly true. The main thing—the inculcation of spiritual truth—was gained equally, whether it was true, or only a supposed case. This was well understood. No person was deceived. The speaker was

not understood to affirm the thing literally narrated, but only to fix the attention more firmly on the moral truth that he presented.

Our Saviour's parables are distinguished above all others for clearness, purity, easiness to be understood, importance of instruction, and simplicity. They are taken mostly from the affairs of common life, and intelligible therefore to all men. They contain much of himself, his doctrine, life, design in coming, and claims, and are therefore of importance to all men; and they are told with simplicity intelligible to the child, yet instructive to men of every rank and age. In his parables, as in all his instructions, our Lord excelled all men in the purity, importance, and sublimity of his doctrine. Never man spake like him. 'A sower went forth to sow.' The image here is taken from an employment known to all men, and therefore understood by all. Nor can there be a more striking illustration of preaching the gospel than placing the seed in the ground to spring up hereafter, and bear fruit. 'Sower.' One who sows or scatters seed. It is not improbable that one was near the Saviour when he spoke this parable.

4 And when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

'Some seeds fell by the way side.' That is, the hard path which the plough had not touched, and where there was no opportunity for it to sink into the earth.

5 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth: 6 And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away.

'Stony places.' Where there was little earth, but hard and rocky underneath; so that the roots could not strike down into the earth for sufficient moisture to support the plant. 'Forthwith.' Immediately. Not that they sprouted and grew any quicker or faster than the others, but they were not so long in reaching the surface. Having little root they withered away.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

'Among thorns.' That is, in a part of the field where the thorns and shrubs had been imperfectly cleared away, and not destroyed. They grew with the grain, crowded it, shaded it, exhausted the earth, and thus choked it.

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred fold, some sixty fold, some thirty fold.

'Into good ground.' The fertile and rich soil. In sowing, by far the largest proportion of seed will fall into the good soil; but Christ did not intend to teach that these proportions would be exactly the same among those who heard the gospel. Parables are designed to teach some general truth; and the circumstances should not be pressed too much in explaining them. 'An hundred fold,' &c. That is, a hundred, sixty, or thirty grains, for each one that was sowed.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

See Matt. xi. 15.

10 And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? 11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

See also Mark iv. 10—12. Luke viii. 9, 10. 'The mysteries of the kingdom.' The word 'mystery,' in the bible, properly means a thing that is concealed, or that has been concealed. Thus the mysteries of the kingdom mean doctrines about the preaching of the gospel, and the establishment of the new kingdom of the Messiah which had not been understood, and which were as yet concealed from the great body of the Jews. See Rom. xvi. 25; xi. 25. Eph. iii. 3, 4, 9. Of this nature was the truth that the gospel was to be preached to the Gentiles, that the Jewish polity was to cease, that the Messiah was to die, &c. To the disciples it was given to know these truths. To the others it was not then given. They were too gross, too earthly; they had conceptions of the Messiah's kingdom too grovelling to understand these truths, even if presented. Hence our Saviour purposely employed a kind of teaching that they did not understand.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

'Whosoever hath,' &c. This is a proverbial mode of speaking. It means that a man who improves what light, grace, and opportunities he has, shall have them increased. From him that improves them not, it is proper that they should be taken away.

13 Therefore speak I to them in parables: because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

'Because they seeing, see not.' Mark, iv. 12, and Luke, viii. 10, say, 'That seeing, they may not see,' &c. But there is no difference. Matthew simply states the fact, that though they saw the natural meaning of the story—though they literally understood

the parable—yet they did not understand its spiritual signification. Mark and Luke do not state the fact, but affirm that he spoke with this intention, implying that such was the result. He had truths to state which he wished his disciples particularly to understand. He stated the doctrines so that if their hearts had been right, and if they had not been malignant and blind, they might have understood them. By little and little, in this way, he prepared many even of the Jews to receive the truth.

14 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: 15 For this people's heart is waxed gross, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

This place is quoted substantially from Isa. vi. 9, 10. The words of Isaiah were as well fitted to express the character of the people in the time of Christ, as in that of the prophet. In this sense they were fulfilled, or filled up, or a case occurred that corresponded to their meaning. The meaning in both places is, that the people were so gross, sensual, and prejudiced, that they would not see the truth, or understand any thing that was contrary to their grovelling opinions and sensual desires; a case by no means uncommon in the world. 'Waxed gross.' Literally, has become fat. It is commonly applied to the body, but is also used to denote one who is stupid and foolish in mind. 'Lest they should see,' &c. Lest they should see their lost condition as sinners, and turn and live. The reason given here why they did not hear and understand the gospel is, that their heart was wrong. They would not attend to the things that make for their peace. 'I should heal them.' Should pardon, sanctify, and save them.

16 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see: and your ears, for they hear.

'Blessed are your eyes,' &c. That is, you are happy, endued with the Divine favour, that you are permitted to see truth which they will not see. You are permitted to understand the spiritual meaning of the parables.

17 For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

'Many prophets and righteous men,' &c. They wished to see



the times of the Messiah. They looked to it as a time when the hopes of the world should be fulfilled, and the just should be happy. See John viii. 56. See also 1 Pet. i. 10—12. Heb. xi. 13. Rev. xix. 10. The object always dearest to the hearts of all righteous men is, to witness the coming and advancement of the kingdom of Christ.

18 ¶ Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.

See also Mark iv. 13—20. Luke viii. 11—15. 'Hear ye therefore the parable of the sower.' That is, hear the explanation, or spiritual meaning, of the narrative given before. Mark adds, iv. 13, 'Know ye not this parable? And how then shall you know all parables?' By which it seems that Jesus regarded this as one of the simplest and plainest of them, and gave an explanation of it that they might understand the general principles of interpreting them.

19 When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

'When any one heareth,' &c. The seed represents the word of God, communicated in any manner to the minds of men, by the scriptures, or by preaching, or by acts of Providence, or by the direct influences of the Holy Spirit. 'Then cometh the wicked one.' That is, Satan. Mark iv. 15, or the devil, Luke viii. 12; the one eminently wicked, the accuser, the tempter. The gospel is preached to men hardened in sin. It makes no impression. It lies like seed in the hard path; it is easily taken away, and never suffered to take root.

20 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; 21 Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.

'In stony places.' Jesus explains this as denoting those who hear the gospel, are caught with it as something new or pleasing, profess themselves greatly delighted with it, and are full of zeal for it. Yet they have no root in themselves. They are not true christians. Their hearts are not changed. 'Anon.' Quickly, or readily. They do not look at it seriously, and as matter of principle. 'Is offended.' That is, stumbles and falls. He has not strength of principle enough, not confidence enough in God to carry him through.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this

world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.

'The thorns.' These represent cares, anxieties, and the deceitful lure of riches, or the way in which a desire to be rich deceives us. They take the time and attention. They do not leave opportunity to think and examine the state of the soul. They promise what they do not yield. The soul is not satisfied. There is the same desire to possess more wealth. And to this there is no end but death. Every evil passion is cherished by the love of gain; and it is no wonder that the word is choked, and every good feeling destroyed, by this execrable love of gold. See 1 Tim. vi. 7-11.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred fold, some sixty, some thirty.

'Into good ground.' Those whose hearts are prepared by grace to receive the word honestly, and to give it full opportunity to grow. In a rich and mellow soil, in a heart that submits itself to the full influence of truth, the gospel takes deep root, and grows; it has full room, and then and there only shows what it is.

24 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field:

'The kingdom of heaven is likened,' &c. That is, the gospel resembles. The meaning of this parable is plain. The field represents the world in which the gospel is preached. The good seed, the truth preached by Christ and his apostles.

25 But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way.

'While men slept, his enemy came,' &c. That is, in the night, when it could be done, without being seen, an enemy came and scattered bad seed on the new ploughed field, perhaps before the good seed had been harrowed in. Satan thus sows false doctrine in darkness. 'Sowed tares.' By 'tares' is probably meant a weed, growing in Palestine. In its growth and form it has a strong resemblance to genuine wheat. But it either produces no grain, or that of a very inferior and hurtful kind. It was extremely difficult to separate it from the genuine wheat, on account of its similarity while growing. Thus it aptly represented hypocrites in the church. Strongly resembling christians in their professions, and, in some respects, in their lives, and impossible to be known, by men, until the Searcher of hearts shall separate them at the day of judgment. An enemy—the devil—hath done it. And no where has he shown profounder cunning, or done

more to adulterate the purity of the gospel. 'And went his way.' There is something very expressive in this. He knew the soil: he knew how the seed would take root, and grow. He had only to sow the seed, and let it alone. So Satan knows the soil in which he sows his doctrine. He knows that in the human heart it will take deep and rapid root. It needs but little culture.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.

'Then appeared the tares also.' That is, then were the tares first discovered. They had grown with the wheat, but so much like it as not to be noticed, till the wheat began to ripen. So true piety and false hopes are not known by professions, by 'blades,' and leaves, and flowers, but by the fruit.

27 So the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it tares? 28 He said unto them, An enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? 29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.

'Ye root up also the wheat.' They so much resembled the true wheat, that it would be difficult to separate them. In the harvest it could be done without injury.

30 Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn.

Our Saviour teaches us here, that hypocrites must be expected in the church; that all hope of removing them entirely would be vain; that he will himself separate them at the proper time. There is no doubt that it is the duty of the church to cut off gross and manifest offenders. He refers to those who may be suspected of hypocrisy, but against whom it cannot be proved; to those who so successfully imitate christians as to make it difficult or impossible for man to distinguish them.

31 ¶ Another parable put he forth unto them, saying. The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: 32 Which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

See also Mark iv. 30—32. The plant here described was very different from that which is known among us. It was a tall shrub, or properly a tree. The Hebrew writers speak of the mustard tree as one on which they could climb, as on a fig-tree. The seeds of this tree were remarkably small; so that they, with the great size of the plant, were an apt illustration of the progress of the church, and of the nature of faith, Matt. xvii. 20.

Young converts often suppose they have much religion, when it is not so. They are, indeed, in a new world. Their hearts glow with new affections. They have an elevation, an emotion, which they may not have afterwards—like a blind man suddenly restored to sight. In a little time, the young convert will see more distinctly, will judge more intelligently, will love more strongly, though not with so much new emotion, and will be prepared to make more sacrifices for the cause of Christ.

33 ¶ Another parable spake he unto them; The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

The other parable declared the fact that the gospel would greatly spread, and that piety in the heart would greatly increase. This declares the way in which it should be done. It is secret, silent, steady; passing certainly through all the faculties of the soul, and all the kingdoms of the world, as leaven, or yeast, though hidden in the flour, and though deposited in only one place, yet works silently till all the mass is brought under its influence. 'Three measures.' The measure mentioned here probably contained about a peck and a half.

34 All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: 35 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world.

This is taken from Psa. lxxviii. 2, 3. The sense, and not the very words of the Psalm are given. Christ taught, as did Asaph, in parables. The words of Asaph described the manner in which Christ taught, and in this sense it could be said that they were fulfilled.

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house: and his disciples came unto him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the tares of the field. 37 He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man; 38 The field



is the world; the good seed are the children of the kingdom; but the tares are the children of the wicked *one*; 39 The enemy that sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the world; and the reapers are the angels. 40 As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire; so shall it be in the end of this world. 41 The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; 42 And shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. 43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

‘Declare unto us.’ That is, explain the meaning of the parable. This was done in so plain a manner as to render comment unnecessary. The Son of man, the Lord Jesus, sows the good seed, that is, preaches the gospel. This he did personally, and does now by his ministers, his providence, and his Spirit, by all the means of conveying truth to the mind. This seed was by various means to be carried over all the world. It was to be confined to no particular nation or people. ‘The good seed are the children of the kingdom;’ that is, of the kingdom of God, or christians. For these the Saviour toiled and died. They are the fruit of his labours. Yet amidst them were wicked men; and all hypocrites and unbelievers in the church are the work of Satan. Yet they must remain together, till the end; when they shall be separated, and the righteous saved, and the wicked lost. The one shall shine clear as the sun; the other be cast into a furnace of fire. We have no idea of more acute suffering, than to be thrown into the fire, and to have our bodies made capable of bearing the burning heat, living in the midst of the flame, and living on in this burning heat for ever and for ever. Jesus meant to teach that this would be a proper representation of the sufferings of hell. He would not talk of hell fire which had no existence; nor would the God of truth hold out such frightful images merely to terrify mankind. If he has spoken of hell, then there is a hell. If he meant to say that the wicked shall suffer, then they will suffer.

44 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

‘The kingdom of heaven.’ He compares it to treasure hid in a field. That is, to money concealed; or, to a mine of silver

or gold, that was undiscovered by others, and unknown to the owner of the field. 'He hideth.' That is, he conceals the fact that he has found it; he does not tell of it. With a view of obtaining this, Christ says, that a man would go and sell his property, and buy the field. Christ does not intend to vindicate his conduct. He merely states the way in which men do actually obtain wealth. He states a case, where a man would sacrifice his property, practise diligence and watchfulness, to obtain it. The point of the parable lies in his earnestness, his anxiety, his care, and his obtaining it. The gospel is valuable as such a treasure, *Psa. xix. 10. Prov. iii. 13—15.* From most men it is hid. When a man sees it, and hears it, it is his duty to sacrifice all in the way to his obtaining it; and to seek it with as much earnestness as other men seek for gold. The truth often lies buried, like rich veins of ore, in the sacred scriptures; it must be searched out with diligence; it is what a sinner needs; and it will repay him for all his sacrifices, *Luke xiv. 33. Phil. iii. 8.*

45 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman, seeking goodly pearls: 46 Who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

The meaning is, that the proper seeking for salvation, or the proper conduct in reference to religion, is like the conduct of a merchant. In his searches he found 'one pearl' of great value, and sold all his possessions to obtain it. Pearls are precious stones found in the shells of oysters, chiefly in the East Indies, *Matt. vii. 6.* They are valuable on account of their beauty and because they are rare: the value of them is greater or less according to their size. The meaning of this parable is nearly the same as the other. It is designed to represent the gospel as of more value than all other things, and to impress on us the duty of sacrificing all that we possess in order to obtain it.

47 ¶ Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto a net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind: 48 Which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away. 49 So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

This parable does not differ in meaning from that of the tares. The gospel is compared to a net, dragging along on the bottom of the lake, and collecting all, good and bad. But in the end of the world, when the net is drawn in, the bad will be separated from

the good: the one lost, and the other saved. Our Saviour never fails to keep before the minds of men, the great truth that there is to be a day of judgment, and that there will be a separation of the good and evil.

51 Jesus saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto him, Yea, Lord. 52 Then said he unto them, Therefore every scribe *which is* instructed unto the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

'Every scribe—instructed unto the kingdom of heaven.' That is, every man who is acquainted with the gospel, or with the truth. A scribe here denotes a man acquainted with the truth. As the disciples had said that they had understood the truth, he says that it should not be unemployed. They should bring it forth in due time, like a householder bringing out of his treasury, or place of deposit, what had been laid up there at any time, as it was needed. 'Treasure,' here, means a place of deposit, not for money merely, but for any thing necessary for the comfort of a family. 'New and old.' Things lately acquired, or things that had been laid up a long time. 'Brought forth.' As occasion demands; as sickness, or calamity, or the wants of his family, or the poor require. So, said Christ, be you. This truth, new or old, which you have gained, keep it not laid up and hid, but bring it forth, in due season, and on proper occasions to benefit others. A minister should be like the father of a family: distributing to the church as it needs; and out of his treasures bringing forth truth, to confirm the feeble, enlighten the ignorant, and guide those in danger of straying away.

53 ¶ And it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed thence. 54 And when he was come into his own country, he taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

'Into his own country.' That is, into Nazareth. Mark, who has also recorded this, (ch. vi. 1—6,) says that it took place on the sabbath. It was common for our Saviour to speak in the synagogues. Any Jew had a right to address the people, if called on by the minister; and our Saviour often availed himself of the right to instruct the people, and declare his doctrines. See Matt. iv. 23.

55 Is not this the carpenter's son? is not his mother called Mary? and his brethren, James, and Joses, and

Simon, and Judas? 56 And his sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *man* all these things?

'Is not this the carpenter's son?' Mark says, Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? Both these expressions would probably be used in the course of the conversation; and Matthew has recorded one, and Mark the other. The expression recorded by Mark is a strong, perhaps decisive, proof that he had worked at the business till he was thirty years of age. The people in the neighbourhood would understand well the nature of his first employments. It is, therefore, almost certain that this had been his manner of life. A useful employment is always honourable. Idleness is the parent of mischief. Our Saviour, therefore, spent the greatest part of his life in honest, useful industry. Life is not wasted in such employments. They are appointed as the lot of man; and, in fidelity, in honest industry however humble, in patient labour, if connected with a life of religion, we may be sure that God will approve our conduct. It was, moreover, the custom for the Jews to train all their children—even those of wealth and learning—to some trade, or manual occupation. Thus Paul was a tent-maker. Compare Acts xviii. 3.

57 And they were offended in him. But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

'They were offended in him.' That is, they took offence at his humble birth; at the poverty of his family; they were too proud to be taught by one whom, in family connexions, they took to be their equal or inferior. Men always look with envy on those of their own rank who advance pretensions to uncommon wisdom or superior power. 'A prophet is not without honour,' &c. This seems to be a proverbial expression. Christ advances it as a general truth. There might be some exceptions to it, but he was not an exception. Every where else he had been more honoured than at home. There they knew his family. They had seen his humble life. They had been his companions. They were envious of his wisdom; and too proud to be taught by him.

58 And he did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

'Did not many mighty works.' Miracles. This implies that he performed some miracles. Mark tells us what they were. He laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them. 'Because of their unbelief.' We are not to suppose that his power was limited by the belief, or unbelief, of men. But they were so prejudiced, that they were not in a condition to judge of evidence, and to be convinced. Compare John x. 20. It would



have been of no use, therefore, in proving to them that he was from God, to have worked miracles. He gave sufficient proof of his mission, and left them in their chosen unbelief, yet without excuse. It is also true, in spiritual things, that the unbelief of a people prevents the influences of the Holy Spirit from being sent down to bless them. God requires faith. He hears only the prayer of faith. And when there is little true belief, and prayer is cold and formal, there the people sleep in spiritual death, and are unblessed.

## CHAPTER XIV.

**1** AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of Jesus,

‘Herod the tetrarch.’ See also Mark vi. 14—16. Luke ix. 7—9. This was the son of Herod the great, who died about three or four years after the birth of Christ, and left his kingdom to his three sons, of whom this Herod Antipas was one. He ruled over Galilee and Perea. See note, Mat. ii. 15. The title tetrarch literally denotes one who rules over a fourth part of any country.

**2** And said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

‘This is John the Baptist.’ His conscience smote him for his crimes. He remembered that he had wickedly put John to death. He knew him to be a distinguished prophet; and he concluded that no other one was capable of working such miracles. The alarm in his court it seems was general. Herod’s conscience told him that this was John. Others thought that it might be the expected Elijah, or one of the old prophets, Mark vi. 15.

**3** ¶ For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias’ sake, his brother Philip’s wife. **4** For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her. **5** And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet.

‘For Herod had laid hold on John,’ &c. See Mark vi. 17—20. Luke iii. 19, 20. This Herodias was a granddaughter of Herod the Great. She was first married to Herod Philip, by whom she had a daughter, Salome, probably the one that danced and pleased Herod. Josephus says that this marriage of Herod Antipas with Herodias took place while he was on a journey to Rome. He stopped at his brother’s; fell in love with his wife; agreed &c

put away his own wife, the daughter of Aretas, king of Petraea; and Herodias agreed to leave her own husband, and live with him. They were living, therefore, in adultery and incest; and John, in faithfulness, though at the risk of his life, had reproved them for their crimes.

6 But when Herod's birth-day was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod.  
7 Whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask.

See also Mark vi. 21—29. 'But when Herod's birth-day was come.' Kings were accustomed to observe the day of their birth with much pomp, and commonly also to give a feast to their principal nobility. See Gen. xl. 20. Mark adds that this birth-day was kept by making a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief estates in Galilee. 'The daughter of Herodias.' That is, Salome, her daughter by her former husband. There is no evidence that it was common for females to dance in this manner in the presence of men. It was a violation of all the rules of modesty and propriety. One great principle of all eastern nations is to keep their females from public view. If they appear in public, it is always with a veil, so closely drawn that their faces cannot be seen. No modest woman would have appeared in this manner before the court; and it is probable, therefore, that she partook of the dissolute principles of her mother.

8 And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

'Being before instructed of her mother.' Not before she danced, but afterwards; and before she made the request of Herod. See Mark vi. 24. 'In a charger.' The original word means a large dish, on which food is placed. We should have supposed that she would have been struck with abhorrence at such a direction. But she seems to have been gratified. John, by his faithfulness, had offended the whole family; and here was ample opportunity for an adulterous mother and dissolute child to gratify their resentment. It was customary then for princes to require the heads of persons ordered for execution to be brought to them, to gratify their resentment, and to ascertain that the sentence had been executed.

9 And the king was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

'And the king was sorry.' Herod had a high respect for John, and feared him. He knew that he was a holy man. He had done some things in obedience to John's precepts, Mark vi. 20.

John was in high repute among the people, and Herod might have been afraid that his murder might excite commotion. Herod, though a wicked man, does not appear to have been insensible to some of the common principles of human nature. Here was a great and most manifest crime proposed: no less than the murder of an acknowledged prophet of the Lord. It was deliberate. It was to gratify the malice of a wicked woman. It was the price of a few moments' entertainment. His conscience, though in feeble and dying accents, checked him. He would have preferred a request not so manifestly wicked, and that would not have involved him in so much difficulty. 'For the oath's sake,' Herod felt that he was bound by this oath. But he was not. The oath should not have been taken. But being taken, he could not be bound by it. No oath could justify a man in committing murder. The true principle is, that Herod was bound by a prior obligation, by the law of God, not to commit murder; and no act of his, be it an oath, or any thing else, could free him from the obligation. 'And them which sat with him at meat.' This was the strongest reason why Herod murdered John. He had not firmness enough to obey the law of God, and to follow the dictates of conscience, against the opinions of wicked men. He was afraid of the charge of cowardice, and want of spirit; afraid of ridicule, and the contempt of the wicked. This is the source of much youthful guilt. We are led along by others. We have not firmness enough to follow the teachings of a father, and of the law of God. Young men are afraid of being called mean and cowardly by the wicked; and they often sink in vice, never to rise again. 'At meat.' That is, at supper. The word meat, at the time the bible was translated, meant provisions of all kinds.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

11 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother.

What an offering to a woman! Josephus says of her that 'she was a woman full of ambition and envy, having a mighty influence on Herod, and able to persuade him to things he was not at all inclined to.' This is one of the many proofs that we have that the evangelists drew characters according to truth.

12 And his disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus.

The head was with Herodias. The body, with pious care, the disciples buried. 'And went and told Jesus.' It is not unreasonable to suppose that in their affliction they came to him for consolation: in all our afflictions we should follow their example, and go and tell Jesus.

13 ¶ When Jesus heard *of it*, he departed thence

by ship into a desert place apart : and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed him on foot out of the cities.

A full narrative of the feeding of the five thousand is given in each of the other evangelists : in Mark vi. 32—44; in Luke ix. 10—17; in John vi. 1—14. 'And when Jesus heard of it, he departed.' He went to a place of safety. He never threw himself unnecessarily into danger. It was proper that he should secure his life, till the time should come when it would be proper for him to die. 'By a ship into a desert place.' That is, he crossed the sea of Galilee. He went to the country east of the sea, into a place little inhabited. Luke says, ix. 10, he went to a place called Bethsaida. See note, Matt. xi. 20. 'A desert place,' means a place little cultivated, where there were few or no inhabitants. On the east of the sea of Galilee there was a large tract of country of this description—rough, uncultivated, and chiefly used to pasture flocks.

14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.

'Was moved with compassion.' That is, pitied them. Mark, vi. 34, says he was moved with compassion because they were as sheep having no shepherd; they had no teachers and guides, who cared for them, and took pains to instruct them. The scribes and pharisees were haughty and proud, and cared little for the common people; and when they did attempt to teach them, they led them astray. They therefore came in great multitudes to him who preached the gospel to the poor, Matt. xi. 5; and who was thus the good Shepherd, John x. 14.

15 ¶ And when it was evening, his disciples came to him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals.

'The time is now past.' That is, the day is passing away; it is near night.

16 But Jesus said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat.

John adds, that previous to this, Jesus had addressed Philip, and asked, Whence shall we buy bread, that these may eat? This he said to prove him; that is, to try his faith; to try the confidence of Philip in himself. Philip immediately began to think of their ability to purchase food for them. Two hundred pennyworth of bread, said he, would not be enough. In the ori-



ginal it is two hundred denarii. These were Roman coins, amounting to about seven pence three farthings each. The whole two hundred therefore would have been equal to six pounds, nine shillings, and two pence sterling. In the view of Philip this was a great sum; a sum which twelve poor fishermen were by no means able to provide. Jesus knew how much they had, and he required of them, as he does of all, implicit faith, and told them to give the people to eat. He requires us to do our duty, or what he commands; and we need not doubt that he will give us strength to accomplish it.

17 And they say unto him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

These loaves were in the possession of a lad, or young man, who was with them, and were made of barley, John v. 9. Barley was a cheap kind of food.

18 He said, Bring them hither to me. 19 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass, and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven he blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude.

‘To sit down.’ In the original it is, to recline on the grass, or to lie as they did at their meals. The Jews never sat, as we do, at meals, but reclined or lay at length. See note, Matt. xxiii. 6. Mark and Luke add, that they reclined in companies, by hundreds and by fifties. ‘And looking up to heaven he blessed.’ Luke adds, he blessed them; that is, the loaves. It is remarkable that our Saviour always sought a blessing on his food. In this he was an example for us. It is right thus to seek the blessing of God. He provides for us; he daily opens his hand, and satisfieth our desires; and it is proper that we should render suitable acknowledgments for his goodness. ‘And brake.’ The loaves of bread, among the Jews, were made thin and brittle, and were therefore broken and not cut.

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

‘And they did all eat, and were filled.’ This was an undoubted miracle. The quantity must have been greatly increased, to have supplied so many. He who could increase that small quantity so much, had the power of creation; and he who could do that, could create the world out of nothing, and had no less than Divine power. ‘Twelve baskets full.’ They were probably such as travellers carried their provisions in. John, vi. 12, says, that Jesus directed them to gather up these fragments, that nothing

might be lost: an example of economy. God creates all food; it is all needed by some person or other; and none should be wasted.

21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, beside women and children.

Probably the number might have been ten thousand. To feed so many was a stupendous miracle. The effect was such as might be expected. John says, vi. 14, that they were convinced by it, that he was that prophet that should come into the world; that is, the Messiah.

22 ¶ And straightway Jesus constrained his disciples to get into a ship, and to go before him unto the other side, while he sent the multitudes away. 23 And when he had sent the multitudes away, he went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, he was there alone.

'And straightway Jesus constrained,' &c. See Mark vi. 45—56. John vi. 15—21. To constrain, means here, to command. They were at this time on the east side of the lake of Gennesareth. He directed them to get into a ship, and cross over to the other side; that is, to Capernaum. The effect of the miracle on the multitudes was so great, John vi. 15, that they believed him to be the Messiah, the king that they had expected; and they were about to take him by force and make him a king. To avoid this, Jesus got away from them as privately as possible. An example for all who are pressed with human honours and applause. Nothing is better to keep the mind humble and unambitious, than to seek some lonely place; to shut out the world, with all its honours; to realize that the great God, before whom all creatures and all honours sink to nothing, is round about us; and to ask him to keep us from pride and vain glory.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

John says they had sailed about twenty-five or thirty furlongs. About seven and a half Jewish furlongs made a mile; so that the distance they had sailed was not more than about four miles. At no place was the sea of Tiberias more than ten miles in breadth; so that they were literally in the midst of the sea.

25 And in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went unto them, walking on the sea.

In the time of our Saviour the Jews divided the night into four watches. These watches consisted of three hours each. The first commenced at six, and continued till nine; the second from nine to twelve; the third from twelve to three; and the fourth

from three to six. The first was called evening; the second midnight; the third cock-crowing; the fourth morning, Mark xiii. 35. It was in the last of these watches, or between three and six in the morning, that Jesus appeared to the disciples. So that he had spent most of the night alone on the mountain in prayer. 'Walking on the sea.' A manifest and wonderful miracle. It was a boisterous sea. It was in a dark night. The little boat was four or five miles from the shore, tossed by the billows.

26 And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

'They were troubled.' They were afraid. It was sufficient to awe them. In the dark night, amidst the tumultuous billows, appeared the form of a man walking on the waves. They thought it was a spirit, an apparition. The ancients believed that the spirits of men frequently appeared after death to the living.

27 But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid. 28 And Peter answered him, and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. 29 And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, Lord, save me. 31 And immediately Jesus stretched forth *his* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Here is an instance of the characteristic ardour and rashness of Peter. He had less real faith than he supposed: more ardour than his faith would justify: rash, headlong, and incautious, really attached to Jesus; but still easily daunted, and prone to fall. He was afraid therefore when in danger, and sinking, cried again for help. Thus he was suffered to learn his own character, and his dependence on Jesus: a lesson which all christians are permitted to learn by dear-bought experience.

32 And when they were come into the ship, the wind ceased. 33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped him, saying, Of a truth thou art the Son of God.

Here was a new proof of the power of Jesus. He that has power over winds and waves has all power. John adds, vi. 21, that the ship was immediately at the land whither they went;

that is, at the land of Gennesaret. Another proof, amidst this collection of wonders, that the Son of God was with them.

34 ¶ And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Gennesaret. 35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto him all that were diseased; 36 And besought him that they might only touch the hem of his garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

'Land of Gennesaret.' This region was in Galilee, on the west side of the sea of Tiberias; and in this land was situated Capernaum, to which he had directed his disciples to go. Jesus only can make us perfectly whole. No other being can save us. He that could heal the body, can save the soul. A word can save us. How ought we to beseech him, for the privilege of obtaining his saving grace, ver. 36.

#### CHAPTER XV.

1 THEN came to Jesus scribes and pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying,

See also Mark vii. 1—9. 'Then came to Jesus,' &c. Mark says, that they saw the disciples of Jesus eating with hands unwashed.

2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

'Transgress the tradition of the elders.' The word 'elders' means ancients, or their ancestors. 'Tradition' means something handed down from one to another by memory: some precept or custom not commanded in the written law. The Jews supposed that when Moses was on mount Sinai, two sets of laws were delivered to him: one was recorded, and is contained in the Old Testament; the other, they said, was handed down from father to son, and kept uncorrupted, till it was recorded in the Talmuds. In these books these pretended laws are now contained. They are exceedingly numerous, and very trifling, and many of them opposed to the truth. They are, however, regarded by the Jews as more important than either Moses or the prophets.

'The pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash their hands oft, eat not,' Mark vii. 3. Mark has also added that this custom of washing extended not merely to their hands before eating, but in coming from the market; and also to pots, and cups, and brazen vessels and tables, Mark vii. 3, 4. They did this professedly for the sake of cleanliness. So far it was well. But they made it a



matter of superstition. They regarded external purity as of much more importance than the purity of the heart. They had many foolish rules about it, which our Saviour did not think it proper to regard; and this was the reason why they found fault with him.

3 But he answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?

They accused him of violating their traditions, as though they were obligatory. In his answer, he said, that those traditions could not be binding, as they violated the commandments of God. He proceeds to specify a case.

4 For God commanded, saying, Honour thy father and mother: and, He that curseth father or mother, let him die the death.

'For God commanded,' &c. That is, in the fifth commandment, Exod. xx. 12; and xxi. 17. To 'honour,' is to obey, to reverence. To curse, is to disobey, to treat with irreverence. 'Let him die the death.' This is a Hebrew phrase, the same as saying, let him surely die.

5 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* father or *his* mother, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me; 6 And honour not his father or his mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition.

'It is a gift.' In Mark it is, *corban*. The word '*corban*' is a Hebrew word denoting a gift. It here means a thing dedicated to the service of God, and, therefore, not to be appropriated to any other use. The Jews were in the habit of making such dedications. They devoted their property to him, for sacred uses, as they pleased. The law required that when a dedication of this kind was made, it should be fulfilled, Deut. xxiii. 21. Psa. lxxvi. 11. The law of God required that a son should honour his parent; that is, among other things, provide for his wants when he was old, and in distress. Yet the Jewish teachers said that it was more important for a man to dedicate his property to God, than to provide for the wants of his parent. If he had once devoted his property—once said it was *corban*, or a gift to God—it could not be appropriated even to the support of a parent. The son was free. They would not suffer him to do any thing for his father after that. Thus he might in a moment free himself from the obligation to obey, or support his father or mother.

Besides, the law said that a man should die who cursed his father; that is, who refused to obey him, or to provide for him, or spoke in anger to him. Yet the Jews said, that though in anger

and in real spite and hatred, a son said to his father, all that I have which could profit you, I have given to God, he should be free from blame. Thus the whole law was made void, or of no use, by what appeared to have the appearance of piety. No man, according to their views, was bound to obey the fifth commandment, and support an aged and needy parent, if either from superstition or spite he chose to give his property to God, that is, to some religious use.

Jesus meant to condemn the practice of giving to God, where it interfered with our duty to parents and relations; where it was done to get rid of the duty of aiding them; and where it was done out of a malignant and rebellious spirit, with the semblance of piety, to get clear of doing to them what God required.

7 *Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying,* 8 *This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.*

Hypocrisy is the concealment of some base principle under the pretence of religion. Never was there a clearer instance of it than this—an attempt to get rid of the duty of providing for needy parents under an appearance of piety towards God. ‘Esaias.’ That is, Isaiah. This prophecy is in Isaiah xxix. 13.

‘Draweth nigh unto me with their mouth,’ &c. That is, they are regular in the forms of worship. They are strict in ceremonial observances, and keep the law outwardly; but God requires the heart, and that they have not rendered.

9 *But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.*

‘In vain do they worship me.’ That is, their attempts to worship are vain, or are not real worship—they are mere forms. ‘Teaching for doctrines,’ &c. The word ‘doctrines,’ here means, the requirements of religion—things to be believed and practised in religion. God only has a right to declare what shall be done in his service; but they held their traditions to be superior to the written word of God, and taught them as doctrines binding the conscience.

10 ¶ *And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:*

See also Mark vii. 15—17. ‘And he called the multitude.’ In opposition to the doctrines of the pharisees, he took occasion to show them that the great source of pollution was the heart. They supposed that external things chiefly defiled a man. On this, all their doctrines about purification were founded. He took occasion, therefore, to direct the people to the true source of real defilement—their own hearts.

11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

The disciples were charged with being sinners for transgressing the tradition of the elders, in eating with unwashed hands. Christ replies that what they should eat could not render them sinners. The man, the moral agent, the soul, could not be polluted by any thing that was eaten. What proceeds from the man himself, from his heart, would defile him. 'Defileth.' Polluteth, corrupteth, rendereth sinful.

12 Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? 13 But he answered and said, Every plant which my heavenly Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.

Religious doctrine is not unaptly compared to a plant. See 1 Cor. iii. 6—8. It is planted in the mind for the purpose of producing fruit in the life, or conduct. Jesus here says that all those doctrines, of which his Father was not the author, must be rooted up, or corrected. The false doctrines of the pharisees, therefore, must be attacked; and it was no wonder that they were indignant.

14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

'Let them alone.' That is, do not be troubled at their rage. Be not anxious about it. The thing was to be expected. They are greatly attached to their traditions, and you are not to wonder or interfere when they are indignant. They have a vast influence over the multitude and it is to be expected that they will be enraged at any doctrines that lessen their authority. By commanding them 'to let them alone,' he does not mean to suffer them to remain in error, without any attempt to refute or correct them, for this he was doing then; but he meant to charge his disciples not to mind them, or to regard their opposition. 'If the blind lead the blind,' &c. This was a plain proposition. A blind man attempting to conduct blind men, would fall into every ditch that was in the way. So with religious teachers. If these pharisees, themselves ignorant and blind, should be suffered to lead the ignorant multitude, both would be destroyed.

God often suffers one man to lead many to ruin. A rich and profligate man, an infidel, a man of learning, a politician, or a teacher, is allowed to sweep multitudes to ruin. But those who are led are not compelled to follow such men. They are free in

choosing such leaders, and they are answerable for being led by them to ruin.

15 Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

See also Mark vii. 17—23. See note, Matt. xiii. 3. The word 'parable' sometimes means a dark or obscure saying, Psa. lxxviii. 2. Peter meant, Explain to us more fully this obscure and somewhat novel doctrine. To us, now, it is plain: to the disciples, just coming out of Judaism, who had been taught by Jewish teachers, the doctrine of Jesus was obscure. Mark says that the disciples asked him. The question was put by Peter in the name of the disciples.

16 And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

He appeals, in explaining this, to their common sense; and he wonders that they had not yet learned to judge the foolish traditions of the Jews by the decisions of common sense, and by his own instructions.

17 Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

The meaning of this may be thus expressed: The food which is eaten does not affect the mind, and therefore cannot pollute it. The doctrine of the pharisees, that neglect of washing defiles a man, or makes him a sinner, cannot be true.

18 But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19 For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: 20 These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Christ proceeds to state what does defile the man, or render him a sinner: 1. 'Evil thoughts.' These are the first things. These are the fountains of all others. Thought precedes action. Thought, or purpose, or motive, gives its character to conduct. 2. 'Murders.' Taking the life of others with malice. The malice has its seat in the heart, 1 John iii. 15. 3. 'Adulteries, fornication.' See Matt. v. 28. 4. 'Thefts.' Theft is taking away the goods of others without their knowledge or consent. It violates, at the same time, two commandments—the tenth in thought, and the eighth in act. 5. 'False witness.' Giving wrong testimony. Concealing the truth, or stating what we know to be false, contrary to the ninth commandment, to injure others, to take away their character or property, or to do them injustice.



It proceeds thus from the heart. 6. 'Blasphemies.' See note, Matt. ix. 3. Blasphemy proceeds from opposition to God, hatred of his character, Rom. viii. 7, and from a desire that there should be no God. See Psa. xiv. 1. Mark adds, 7. 'Covetousness,'—the unlawful desire of what others possess. 8. 'Wickedness.' The original here means malice, a desire of injuring others, Rom. i. 29. 9. 'Deceit;' that is fraud, concealment, cheating in trade. 10. 'Lasciviousness.' Lust, licentiousness, unbridled passion. 11. An evil eye. That is, an eye sour, malignant, proud, devising or purposing evil. See Matt. v. 28; xx. 15. 2 Peter ii. 14. 12. Pride. An improper estimate of our own importance—always the work of an evil heart. 13. Foolishness. Not want of intellect; but moral folly, consisting in choosing bad ends, and bad means of gaining them. All sin is folly. It is foolish for a man to disobey God, and think to prosper.

21 ¶ Then Jesus went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.

This narrative is also found in Mark vii. 24—30. 'The coasts of Tyre and Sidon.' These cities were on the sea-coast or shore of the Mediterranean. See note Matt. xi. 21. He went there for the purpose of concealment, Mark vii. 24; perhaps still to avoid Herod.

22 And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, *thou* son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.

This woman is called also a Greek, a Syro-Phœnician by birth, Mark vii. 26. The Phœnicians were descended from the Canaanites. That country was taken by the Greeks under Alexander the Great, and those cities, in the time of Christ, were Greek cities. This woman was a Syro-Phœnician, born in that country, and descended probably from the ancient Canaanites. 'Is grievously vexed with a devil.' See note, Matt. iv. 24. The woman showed great earnestness. She cried unto him, and fell at his feet, Mark vii. 25.

23 But he answered her not a word. And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

'But he answered her not a word.' This was done to try her faith, and that there might be exhibited to the apostles an example of the effect of persevering supplication.

24 But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

'The lost sheep of the house of Israel' were the Jews. He

came first to them. He came as their expected Messiah. The ministry of Jesus was confined almost entirely to the Jews.

25 Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.

'She came and worshipped.' That is, bowed down to him, did him reverence. See note, Matt. viii. 2.

26 But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* to dogs.

'It is not meet.' That is, it is not fit or proper. 'Children's bread.' The Jews considered themselves as the peculiar children of God. To all other nations they were accustomed to apply terms of contempt, of which 'dogs' was the most common.

Our Saviour did not intend to justify or sanction the use of such terms. He meant to try her faith. As if he had said, You are a Gentile. I am a Jew. The Jews call themselves children of God. You they vilify, and abuse, calling you a dog. Are you willing to submit to these appellations, to receive a favour of one of that nation? It was a trial of her faith, and not lending his sanction to the propriety of the abusive term. He regarded her with a different feeling.

27 And she said, Truth, Lord: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table.

'Truth Lord,' &c. What you say is true. Let the Jews have the chief benefit of thy ministry. Let me be regarded as a dog, a heathen, as unworthy of every thing. Yet grant one exertion of that almighty power, displayed so signally among the Jews, and heal the despised daughter of a despised heathen mother.

28 Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great *is* thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.

'Great is thy faith.' That is thy trust, confidence. The daughter was healed. Going home, she found her well and composed, Mark vii. 30.

29 And Jesus departed from thence, and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there. 30 And great multitudes came unto him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at Jesus' feet; and he healed them: 31 Inso-much that the multitude wondered when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to

walk, and the blind to see : and they glorified the God of Israel.

'Sea of Galilee.' That is, the lake of Genesareth. See note, Matt. iv. 24. 'Maimed.' Those to whom a hand or foot was wanting. See Matt. xviii. 8. To cure them—that is, to restore a hand or foot—was a direct act of creating power. 'And they glorified the God of Israel.' To glorify, here, means to praise, to acknowledge his power and goodness.

32 ¶ Then Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat: and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way. 33 And his disciples say unto him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude? 34 And Jesus saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes. 35 And he commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. 36 And he took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to his disciples, and the disciples to the multitude. 37 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets full. 38 And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

The miracle recorded here, the feeding of the four thousand, took place on a mountain, near the sea of Galilee. The same account is recorded in Mark viii. 1—10. The circumstances of the miracle are so similar to the one recorded in Matt. xiv. 14—21, as to need no particular explanation.

'Three days, and have nothing to eat.' During that time they had been deprived of their ordinary, regular food. They had only a very scanty supply, and on the third day even that began to fail.

39 And he sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

'Coasts of Magdala.' Mark says, 'The parts of Dalmanutha.' These were probably small towns on the east side of the sea of Galilee, and near to each other.

## CHAPTER XVI.

1 THE pharisees also with the sadducees came, and tempting, desired him that he would show them a sign from heaven.

See also Mark viii. 11, 12. 'The pharisees also with the sadducees.' See note, Matt. iii. 7. 'Tempting.' That is, trying him—feigning a desire to see evidence that he was the Messiah, but with a real wish to see him make the attempt to work a miracle and fail. 'A sign from heaven.' Some miraculous appearance in the sky. It is proper to say, that though Christ did not choose then to show such wonders, yet most stupendous signs from heaven were exhibited at his death.

2 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather*: for the sky is red. 3 And in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day*: for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not discern the signs of the times?

The meaning of this answer is, that as there are certain indications by which you judge about the weather, so there are sufficient indications by which you should judge concerning me and these times. My miracles, and the state of affairs in Judea, are an indication by which you should judge of these times. 'Is red.' Almost all nations have observed this as an indication of the weather. 'In the morning—the sky is red and lowering.' That is, there are dark and threatening clouds in the sky, which in the east are made red by the rays of the rising sun. This, in Judea, was a sign of a tempest.

Men will often judge far more correctly about natural than spiritual things. About natural objects they are watchful. In them they feel a deep interest. And they watch for every sign that may affect their interest. They are too much concerned to judge falsely. But they feel no such interest in religious things. Men who have good sense, and much wisdom in regard to worldly concerns, are exceedingly foolish in regard to religion.

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas. And he left them, and departed.

'A wicked and adulterous generation,' &c. See note, Matt. xii. 38—40. Mark adds, viii. 12, that he sighed deeply in spirit. He did not say this without feeling. He was greatly affected with their perverseness and obstinacy.

5 And when his disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

This account is recorded also in Mark viii. 13—21. 'And when his disciples had come to the other side.' That is, to the other side of the sea of Galilee. Mark says that he entered into a ship again, and departed to the other side. 'Had forgotten to



take bread.' That is, had forgotten to lay in a sufficient supply. They had, it seems, not more than one loaf, Mark viii. 14.

6 ¶ Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the pharisees and of the sadducees.

'Take heed,' &c. That is, be cautious, be on your guard. 'The leaven of the pharisees and sadducees.' Leaven is used in making bread. Its use is to pass through the flour, and cause it to ferment or to swell, and become light. It passes secretly, silently, but certainly. None can see its progress. So it was with the doctrines of the pharisees. They were insinuating, artful, plausible.

7 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread. 8 *Which* when Jesus perceived, he said unto them, O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread? 9 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 10 Neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? 11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the pharisees and of the sadducees? 12 Then understood they how that he bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the pharisees and of the sadducees.

'They reasoned,' &c. The disciples did not understand him as referring to their doctrine, because the word 'leaven' was not often used among the Jews to denote doctrines—no other instance of the use of the word occurring in the scriptures. 'O ye of little faith!' Jesus, in reply, said that they should not be so anxious about the supply of their wants. They should not have supposed, after the miracles that he had wrought in feeding so many, that he would caution them to be anxious about procuring bread for their necessities.

13 ¶ When Jesus came into the coasts of Cesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of man, am?

See also Mark viii. 27—29, and Luke ix. 18—20. 'Cesarea Philippi.' There were two cities in Judea called Cesarea. One was situated on the borders of the Mediterranean, and the other was the one mentioned here. It was greatly enlarged and ornamented by Philip the tetrarch, son of Herod, and called Cesarea, in honour of the Roman emperor Tiberius Cæsar. To distinguish

it from the other *Cesarea*, the name of Philip was added, and it was called *Cesarea Philippi*, or *Cesarea of Philip*. It was situated in the boundaries of the tribe of Naphtali, and near mount Lebanon, and was in the most northern part of Judea. 'When Jesus came,' Mark says, viii. 27, that this conversation took place when they were in the way. While in the way, Jesus took occasion to call their attention to the truth that he was the Messiah. This truth it was of much consequence that they should fully believe and understand; and it was important, therefore, that he should often learn their views, and establish them if right, and correct them if wrong. He wished to obtain the sentiments of the people respecting himself.

14 And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

See note on Matt. xi. 14. They supposed he might be John the Baptist, as Herod did, risen from the dead. See Matt. xiv. 2. He strongly resembled John in his manner of life, and in the doctrines which he taught. 'Jeremias,' Jeremias.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?  
16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Peter, expressing the views of the apostles, with characteristic forwardness answered the question proposed to them by Jesus: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." 'The Christ,' The Messiah, the Anointed of God. Note, Matt. i. 1. 'The Son,' That is, the Son by way of eminence, in a peculiar sense. Note, Matt. i. 17. This appellation was understood as implying divinity, John x. 29—36. 'Of the living God.' The term 'living' was given to the true God, to distinguish him from idols, that are dead, or lifeless blocks and stones. He is also the source of life, temporal, spiritual, and eternal. The term 'living' is often given to him in the Old Testament, Josh. iii. 10. 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36. Jer. x. 9, 10, &c. In this noble confession, Peter expressed the full belief of himself and his brethren that Jesus was the long expected Messiah.

17 And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

'Simon Bar-jona' is the same as Simon son of Jona. 'Bar' is a Syriac word, signifying son, John i. 42; xxi. 16, 17. 'Blessed,' That is, happy, honoured. 'Flesh and blood.' This phrase commonly signifies man, see Gal. i. 16. Eph. vi. 12: he meant to say that man had not revealed it. This they had been taught by

his miracles, his instructions, and the direct teachings of God on their minds.

18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

The word 'Peter,' in Greek, means a rock. It was given to Simon by Christ, when he called him to be a disciple, John i. 42. Cephas is a Syriac word, meaning the same as Peter—a rock, or stone. The meaning of this phrase may be thus expressed: "I have given to you a name expressive of your character. I have called you Peter, a rock, denoting firmness, solidity; and your confession has shown that the name is appropriate. I see that you are worthy of the name, and will be a distinguished support of my religion." 'And upon this rock,' &c. Upon this truth, that thou hast confessed, that I am the Messiah, will I build my church. Or, "Thou art a rock. Thou hast shown thyself firm, and fit for the work of laying the foundation of the church, and labouring to rear it. Upon thee will I build it. Thou shalt be highly honoured; thou shalt be first in making known the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles." This was accomplished. See Acts ii. 14—36, where he first preached to the Jews, and Acts x. where he preached the gospel to Cornelius and his neighbours, Gentiles. See also Gal. ii. 9. But Christ did not mean, as the Roman Catholics say, to exalt Peter to supreme authority above all the other apostles, or to say that he was the only one on whom he would rear his church. See Matt. xx. 26; xviii. 18, and Acts xv. where the advice of James, and not of Peter, was followed. See also Gal. ii. 11, where Paul withstood Peter to his face, because he was to be blamed. The whole meaning of the passage is this: "I will make you the honoured instrument of first publishing my gospel to Jews and Gentiles, and will make you a firm and distinguished preacher in building my church." 'Will build my church.' This refers to the custom of building in Judea on a rock, or other very firm foundation. See note, Matt. vii. 24. The word 'church' means, sometimes, the whole body of believers, Eph. i. 22. 1 Cor. x. 32. This is its meaning in this place. It means, also, a particular society of believers, worshipping in one place, Acts viii. 1; ix. 31. 1 Cor. i. 2, &c. 'And the gates of hell,' &c. Ancient cities were surrounded by walls. In the 'gates,' by which they were entered, were the principal places for holding courts, transacting business, and deliberating on public matters. See note, Matt. vii. 13. The word 'gates,' therefore, is sometimes used for counsels and designs. 'Hell' means, here, the place of departed spirits, particularly evil spirits. And the meaning of the passage is, that all the plots, stratagems, and machinations, of the enemies of the church, should not be able to overcome it—a promise that has been remarkably fulfilled.

19 And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven : and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

A 'key' is an instrument for opening a door. He that is in possession of it has the power of access, and has a general care and administration of a house. Hence, in the Bible, a key is used as a symbol of superintendence, an emblem of power and authority. See Isa. xxii. 22. Rev. i. 18; iii. 7. When Christ says, therefore, he will give Peter the keys of the kingdom of heaven, he means that he will make him the instrument of opening the door of faith to the world—the first to preach the gospel to both Jews and Gentiles. This was done, Acts ii. 14—36. and x. The power of the keys was given to Peter alone, solely for this reason : the power of binding and loosing on earth was given to the other apostles with him. See Matt. xviii. 18. The only pre-eminence, then, that Peter had, was the honour of first opening the doors of the gospel to the world. 'Whatsoever thou shalt bind,' &c. The phrase to 'bind' and to 'loose' was often used by the Jews. It meant to prohibit and to permit. To bind a thing was to forbid it; to loose, to allow it to be done. Thus they said about gathering wood on the sabbath day, the school of Shammai binds it—that is, forbids it; the school of Hillel looses it—that is, allows it. When Jesus gave this power to the apostles, he meant that whatsoever they forbade or permitted, or commanded, should have divine authority—that is, should be bound, or loosed in heaven, or meet the approbation of God : they were to be guided infallibly by him in the organization of the church.

20 Then charged he his disciples, that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ.

'Then charged,' &c. That is, he then commanded them. Mark, viii. 30, and Luke, ix. 21, says that he strictly or severely charged them. He laid emphasis on it, as a matter of much importance. The reason of this seems to be, that his time had not fully come; he was not willing to rouse the Jewish malice, and to endanger his life, by having it proclaimed that he was the Messiah.

21 ¶ From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

See also Mark ix. 31—33; Luke ix. 22. 'From that time forth,' This is the first intimation that he gave them that he was



to die in this cruel manner. He had taken much pains to convince them that he was the Messiah; he saw by the confession of Peter that they were convinced; and he then began to prepare their minds for the awful event that was before him. Had he declared this when he first called them, they might have been afraid to follow him. 'Elders.' The men of the great council, or sanhedrim. See note, Matt. v. 7. 'Chief priests and scribes.' See note, Matt. iii. 7.

22 Then Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.

Peter was strongly attached to him. He could not bear to think of his death. He expected, moreover, that he would be the triumphant Messiah. In his ardour, he seized him by the hand and said, 'Be it far from thee.' It expressed Peter's strong desire that it might not be. The word 'rebuke' here means to admonish, or to entreat earnestly, as in Luke xvii. 3. It does not mean that Peter assumed authority over Christ; but that he earnestly expressed his wish that it might not be so.

23 But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

The word 'Satan' means literally, an adversary. It is applied to the devil as the opposer or adversary of man. Christ meant to say that this interference was improper—that Peter's views and feelings stood in the way of the accomplishment of his designs. 'Thou art an offence.' That is a stumbling-block. Your advice and wishes are in my way. If followed, they would prevent the very thing for which I came. 'Thou savourest not.' That is, thou thinkest not. You think that those things should not be done, which God wishes to be done. You judge of this matter as men do, and not as God, who sees it best that I should die, to promote the great interests of mankind.

24 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

This discourse is also recorded in Mark viii. 34—38; ix. 1, and Luke ix. 23—37. 'Let him deny himself.' Let him not seek his own happiness as the supreme object, but be willing to renounce all, and lay down his life also, if required. 'Take up his cross.' See note Matt. x. 38.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.

'Whosoever will save his life, &c. See note, Matt. x. 39.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

To gain the whole world means to possess it as our own,—all its riches, honours, and pleasures. Those who are striving to gain the world, and are unwilling to give it up for the sake of religion, will lose their souls. If the soul is lost, nothing can be given in exchange for it, or it can never afterwards be saved. There is no redemption in hell.

27 For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works.

‘For the Son of man,’ &c. That is, the Lord Jesus Christ shall return to judge the world. ‘Reward.’ He will deal with them according to their characters. This fact, that he will come to judgment, Christ gives as a reason why we should be willing to deny ourselves and follow him. Even though now it should be attended with contempt and suffering, yet then he will reward his followers for all their shame and sorrows, and receive them to his kingdom. He adds, Mark viii. 38, that if we are ashamed of him here, he will be ashamed of us there. That is, if we reject and disown him here, he will reject and disown us there.

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.

‘Taste of death.’ That is, die. See John viii. 51—53. Before they die they shall see this. ‘Son of man coming in his kingdom.’ Mark and Luke have explained this, Mark ix. 1: ‘Until they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.’ Luke ix. 27; ‘Till they see the kingdom of God.’ The meaning is, till they should see Christ’s kingdom, that is, his church, now small, feeble, and despised, greatly enlarged, established, and spreading with great rapidity and extent. All this was accomplished. All these apostles, except Judas, lived to see the wonders of the day of Pentecost; some of them, John particularly, saw the gospel established in a large part of the known world. It will not be long before he will come. At any rate, it will not be long before we shall meet him. Death is near. And then we must stand before him, and give an account of the deeds done in the body.

## CHAPTER XVII.

1 AND after six days Jesus taketh Peter, and James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart,

See also Mark ix. 2—10. Luke ix. 28—36. 'And after six days.' That is, six days from the conversation recorded in the last chapter. Luke, ix. 28, says, about eight days after. Matthew mentions the six days that intervened between the day of the conversation and the transfiguration. Luke includes both those days and thus reckons eight. These three disciples were with him also in the garden of Gethsemane, Mark xiv. 33. He designed to fit them, in an eminent degree, for the work of the gospel ministry, by the previous manifestations of his glory, and of his patience in suffering. 'Into a high mountain apart.' That is 'apart' from the other disciples. It is commonly supposed that this was mount Tabor, a high mountain in Galilee. Luke adds, ix. 28, that he ascended there to pray. Our Saviour prayed much. When he did it, he chose to be alone. For this purpose he often ascended mountains, or went into deserts.

2 And was transfigured before them : and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light.

The word 'transfigure' means to change the appearance, or form. What this change was, we are expressly told. 1. His face shone as the sun ; that is, with a peculiar brightness. A similar appearance is described respecting Moses when he came down from the mount, Ex. xxxiv. 29, 30. 2. Another change was that of his garments. They were white as the light. Mark says, white as snow, so as no fuller on earth could whiten them. The word 'fuller' means one who bleaches cloth, or makes it white ; one who cleanses white garments, when by wearing they become soiled. Among the Greeks it was a distinct trade. Luke says white and glistening ; that is, resplendent, shining, or a very bright white. 'Raiment.' Clothing. Apparel. John refers to this transfiguration in ch. i. 14 ; and Peter in his second epistle i. 16, 17.

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias, talking with him.

Moses, a distinguished servant of God, by whom the law was given, and whose institutions typified the Messiah. Elias or Elijah, a distinguished prophet, taken to heaven without seeing death. See 2 Kings ii. 11. They appeared in glory ; Luke ix. 31, in a glorious form. 'Talking with him.' Luke, ix. 31, informs us that they conversed about his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem. To redeemed spirits, that death was an object of intense interest. By faith in that death, they had been saved ; and now that it was near, and the Redeemer of mankind was about to die, it is no wonder that this was the burden of his and their thoughts.

Luke adds, ix. 32, that Peter, and they who were with him,

were heavy with sleep. It was after they were awake that they saw this vision. Probably the sudden splendour, the bright shining, aroused them from sleep.

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto Jesus, Lord, it is good for us to be here : if thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles ; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

A 'tabernacle' is a tent. It was made commonly by fixing posts into the ground, and stretching on them cloth, fastened by cords, Isa. liv. 2. Peter was rejoiced at the vision, and desirous of its continuance. They were frightened, amazed, and rejoiced ; and, in the ecstasy of the moment, they proposed to remain there.

5 While he yet spake, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them : and behold, a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased ; hear ye him.

The word 'overshadow,' here means rather to be diffused, or spread over them. A 'cloud' was a symbol of the divine presence. Thus God went before the Israelites in a cloudy pillar—dark by day, and bright by night, Ex. xiv. 19, 20. God appeared in a cloud on Mount Sinai, Ex. xxiv. 15, 16 ; and a cloud, the symbol of the divine presence, was seen in the most holy place in the temple, 1 Kings viii. 10, 11. Ezek. i. 4 ; x. 4. When, therefore, the disciples saw this cloud, they were prepared to hear the word of the Lord. 'This is my beloved Son.' This was the voice of God. This was the second time that, in a remarkable manner, he had declared this. See Matt. iii. 17. This was spoken to confirm the disciples ; to declare their duty to hear Christ, rather than any other, and to honour him more than Moses and Elijah. After this, it was impossible for them to doubt that he was truly the Son of God. See 2 Pet. i. 17, 18.

6 And when the disciples heard *it*, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

They entered into the cloud ; or the cloud enveloped them, Luke ix. 34. They were therefore afraid. They were awed at the presence of God ; and their fears were scattered only by the voice of their beloved Master.

7 And Jesus came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid. 8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save Jesus only. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, Jesus



charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead.

'Tell the vision to no man.' While he was with them, it was unnecessary that they should relate what they had seen. When he was crucified, and had ascended, they would need this evidence that he was the Christ. Then they were to use it. There were three witnesses of it; as many as the law required; and the proof that he was the Messiah was clear. 'Vision,' Sight; appearance. What they had seen on the mount.

Mark adds, ix. 10, they kept this saying, questioning what the rising of the dead should mean. The pharisees believed that the dead would rise; and there is no doubt that the disciples believed it. But their views were not clear. And in particular, they did not understand what he meant by his rising from the dead.

10 And his disciples asked him, saying, Why then say the scribes, that Elias must first come?

See also Mark ix. 11—13. 'Why then say the scribes,' &c. The disciples appear to have been satisfied now, that he was the Messiah. The transfiguration had taken away all their doubts. But they recollected that it was a common doctrine among the Jews that Elijah should appear before the Messiah came; and they did not then recollect that John the Baptist had appeared in the spirit and power of Elias. To this difficulty the word 'then' refers. See note, Matt. xi. 14.

11 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things:

He did not mean by this that Elijah was yet to come; but that it was a true doctrine which the scribes taught, that Elijah would appear before the coming of the Messiah. 'To restore,' means to put into the former situation, to heal, to correct, to put in proper order. Here it means, that Elijah would be the instrument of reforming the people; of restoring them, in some measure, to proper notions about the Messiah, and preparing them for his coming. John corrected many of their notions about the Messiah, see Matt. iii., and was the instrument of an extensive reformation.

12 But I say unto you, That Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of man suffer of them. 13 Then the disciples understood that he spake unto them of John the Baptist.

'Elias is come.' That is, John the Baptist has come, in the spirit and power of Elias. See Luke i. 17. 'They have done whatsoever they listed.' The word 'list' is an old English word,

signifying to choose, to desire, to be inclined. See John iii. 8. They had done to John as they pleased; that is, they had put him to death.

Mark adds, ix. 12. that Jesus told them that it was written of the Son of man that he must suffer many things, and be set at naught. This was written of him particularly in the liii. chapter of Isaiah. No prophecy was ever more strikingly fulfilled. See Luke xxiii. 11.

14 ¶ And when they were come to the multitude, there came to him a *certain* man kneeling down to him, and saying,

This narrative, with some additions, is found in Mark ix. 14—29, and Luke ix. 37—43. This took place on the day following the transfiguration, Luke ix. 37. With them, as Mark, ix. 15, informs us, were scribes questioning with them. That is, they were professedly making inquiries about the Saviour, but really attempting to introduce their own sentiments, and to draw them off from him, intending to insinuate that such a person could not be the Christ. The multitude, seeing Jesus coming down, left the scribes, and ran to meet him, (Mark.) They were amazed, probably because they had not expected to see him there. In their joy at meeting him in this unexpected manner, they saluted him, (Mark.) That is, they prostrated themselves before him, after the manner of salutation in eastern countries. See note, Luke x. 4. Jesus seeing the scribes and their artful design, reproved them, by asking them why they questioned thus with his disciples, Mark ix. 16. Conscious of their guilt, and their base purpose, they returned no answer.

15 Lord, have mercy on my son: for he is lunatic, and sore vexed, for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water.

The word 'Lord,' here, means, sir, a title of civility, not implying divinity. This was an only son, (Luke.) He was possessed with a devil. This calamity was attended with the following symptoms: he was lunatic, see note, Matt. iv. 24; he was 'sore vexed,' that is, he suffered greatly, or was greatly afflicted; he fell often suddenly, in the manner of persons having epileptic fits; he was dumb, that is, he was dumb, except when the fit was coming on him; for Luke says, that when the spirit took him, he cried suddenly out; he foamed and gnashed with his teeth, and wasted away, or became poor and emaciated. It tore him, (Luke,) and scarcely departed from him, or he had only short intervals of reason.

16 And I brought him to thy disciples, and they could not cure him. 17 Then Jesus answered and

said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him hither to me.

'Perverse' means that which is twisted or turned from the proper direction. Applied to a 'generation,' or race of men, it means that they held opinions turned or perverted from the truth, and were wicked in their conduct. He applied this probably chiefly to the Jews, and not to his real disciples. 'How long shall I suffer you?' That is, how long shall I bear with you? This was not an expression of impatience or complaint, so much as a reproof that they were so slow to believe that he was the Messiah, notwithstanding his miracles, and that even his disciples so slowly learned to put the proper trust in him. Mark adds, ix. 20-22, that when he that was possessed was brought, the spirit, by a last desperate struggle, threw him down, and tore him, and left him apparently dead. He adds, further, that the case had existed during the whole life of his son, from a child. This was a case of uncommon obstinacy. The affliction was fixed and lasting. The disciples, seeing this, despaired of being able to cure him: lacked the faith which was necessary; doubted whether they could cure him, and therefore could not. Jesus said to the father, Mark ix. 23, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. Not that his faith would give Jesus the power to heal him, but would render it proper that he should exert that power in his favour. In this way, and in this only, are all things possible to believers. The father came, as a father should do, weeping, and praying that his faith might be increased so as to make it proper that Jesus should interpose in his behalf, and save his child. 'Help my unbelief,' Mark ix. 24. This was an expression of humility. If my faith is defective, supply what is lacking. Help me to overcome my unbelief. Let not the defect of my faith be in the way of this blessing.

18 And Jesus rebuked the devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

'And Jesus rebuked the devil.' Mark, ix. 25, has recorded the words which he used: words implying reproof and command: 'Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him, and enter no more into him.' And the spirit cried, and with a mighty convulsion came out, leaving him apparently dead.

19 Then came the disciples to Jesus apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

This inquiry was made in some house to which they retired near the place where the miracle was performed, (Mark.) Jesus told them, in reply, that it was because of their unbelief that they

had not been able to cast him out. Their faith would not have made it more easy for God to work this miracle, but such was his will; such the way in which he worked miracles, that he required faith in those who were the instruments.

20 And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief. for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

'As a grain of mustard seed.' See note, Matt. xiii. 31, 32. The mustard seed was the smallest of all seeds, but produced the largest of all herbs. The meaning is, if you have increasing, enlarged faith, growing and strengthening from small beginnings, you can perform the most difficult undertaking. There is a principle of vitality in the grain of seed tending to great results, which illustrates the nature of faith. 'Ye shall say unto this mountain,' &c. If they had such faith, they might accomplish the most difficult undertakings—things that at first would appear impossible.

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

'This kind' means this kind of devils; this species of possession. Where they have had long possession; where they produce such painful, and fixed, and alarming effects. 'Goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.' That is, in order to work miracles of this kind, to cast out devils in cases so obstinate and dreadful as this, faith of the highest kind is necessary. That faith is produced and kept vigorous by much prayer, and by such abstinence from food as fits the mind for the highest exercises of religion, and leaves it free to hold communion with God.

22 ¶ And while they abode in Galilee, Jesus said unto them, The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men.

See also Mark ix. 30—33. Luke ix. 43—45. To betray, means to deliver up in a treacherous manner. This was done by Judas Iscariot, called on that account the traitor, Matt. xxvi. 14—16, 47—50.

23 And they shall kill him, and the third day he shall be raised again. And they were exceeding sorry.

See Matt. xii. 40. Mark and Luke add, that they understood not that saying, and it was hid from them, and they were afraid to ask him. They were strongly attached to him, and were exceedingly sorry (Matthew) at any intimation that he was soon to



leave them. They were not willing to believe it. To be betrayed into the hands of his enemies, and put to death, appeared to them to be frustrating all their expectations. Though what he said was plain enough, yet they could not see how he could be the Messiah, and yet be put to death in this manner. Nor did they understand it fully till after his resurrection.

24 ¶ And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute *money* came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?

‘And when they were come to Capernaum.’ See note Matt. iv. 13. ‘They that received tribute.’ In the original this is, they who received the two drachms. The drachm was worth about sevenpence halfpenny of our money. This tribute was paid to the Jewish collectors for the use of the temple service. It was permitted in the law of Moses, (see Ex. xxx. 11—16) that in numbering the people half a shekel should be received of each man for the services of religion. It was devoted to the purchase of animals for the daily sacrifice; wood, flour, salt, incense, &c. for the use of the temple. Two drachms were about equal to half a shekel. ‘Doth not your master pay tribute?’ This tribute was voluntary; and they therefore asked him whether he was in the habit of paying taxes for the support of the temple. Peter replied, that it was his custom to pay all the usual taxes of the nation.

25 He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers? 26 Peter, saith unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free.

‘Jesus prevented him.’ That is Jesus commenced speaking before Peter, or spoke before Peter had told him what he had said. This implies that though not present with Peter, when he gave the answer, yet Jesus was acquainted with what he had said. ‘Prevented.’ Went before, or preceded. ‘Their own children.’ Their sons; the members of their family. ‘Or of strangers?’ The word ‘strangers’ does not mean foreigners, but those who were not their own sons or members of their family. The meaning of this may be thus expressed: “Kings do not tax their own sons. This tribute money is taken up for the temple service; that is, the service of my Father. I, therefore, being the Son of God, for whom this is taken up, cannot be lawfully required to pay this tribute.”

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the-sea, and cast an hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his

mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee.

‘Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them.’ That is, lest they should think that we despise the temple and its service, and thus provoke needless opposition, it is best to pay it to them. ‘Thou shalt find a piece of money.’ In the original thou shalt find a stater, a Roman silver coin of the value of four drachms, or one shekel, and of course sufficient to pay the tribute for two, himself and Peter. Here is proof that Jesus was possessed of divine attributes. He knew that in the first fish that came up there would be such a coin, which proved his omniscience. It is by no means strange that a fish should have swallowed a silver coin, such cases have often occurred.

### CHAPTER XVIII.

1 AT the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?

See also Mark ix. 33—41. Luke ix. 46—50. ‘Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?’ They asked the question because they supposed that Jesus was about to set up a temporal kingdom of great splendour; and they wished to know who should have the principal offices and posts of honour and profit. Mark, ix. 34, informs us that they had had a dispute on this subject in the way. Luke, ix. 47, says that Jesus perceived the thought of their heart: an act implying omniscience, for none can search the heart but God, Jer. xvii. 10. The disciples, conscious that the subject of their dispute was known, requested Jesus to decide it, Matt. xviii. 1. They were at first silent through shame, (Mark,) but perceiving that the subject of their dispute was known, they came, as Matthew states, and referred the matter to him for his opinion.

2 And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, 3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.

The word ‘converted,’ means changed, or turned. It means changed, or turned from one habit of life, or set of opinions to another, James v. 19. Luke xxii. 32. The phrase, ‘except ye be converted,’ does not here imply of necessity that they were not christians before, or had not been born again. It means that their opinions and feelings about the kingdom of the Messiah must be changed. They had supposed that he was to be a temporal prince. And they were ambitiously inquiring who should hold the highest offices. Jesus told them they were wrong in

their views and expectations. No such things would take place. From these notions they must be turned, changed, or converted, or they could have no part in his kingdom. These ideas did not fit at all the nature of his kingdom. 'And become as little children.' Children are characteristically humble and teachable. By requiring his disciples to be like them, he did not intend to express any opinion about the native moral character of children, but simply, that in these respects, they should become like them. They should lay aside their ambitious views, and pride, and be willing to occupy their proper station—a very lowly one. Mark says, ix. 35, that Jesus, before he placed the little child in the midst of them, told them that, if any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. That is, he shall be the most distinguished christian who is the most humble, and who is willing to be esteemed least and last of all.

4 Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

'The greatest,' &c. That is, shall be the most eminent christian: shall have most of the true spirit and blessings of religion.

5 And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me.

'And whoso shall receive one such little child.' That is, whoso shall receive and love one with a spirit like this child: humble, meek, unambitious, or as a real christian. 'In my name.' As a follower of me; or because he is attached to me. Whoso receives one possessed of my spirit, and who, because he has that spirit, loves him, loves me also. The word 'receive' means to approve, love, or treat with kindness; to aid in the time of need. See Matt. xxv. 35—40.

Mark, ix. 38, and Luke, ix. 49, add a conversation that took place on this occasion, that has been omitted by Matthew. John told him that they had seen one casting out devils in his name, and they forbid him, because he followed not with them. Jesus replied that he should not have been forbidden, for there was no one who worked a miracle in his name that could lightly speak evil of him. That is, though he did not attend them, though he had not joined himself to their society, yet he could not be really opposed to him.

6 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea.

'Whoso shall offend.' That is, cause to fall, or to sin; or should place any thing in their way to hinder their piety or

happiness. Note, Matt. v. 29. 'These little ones.' That is, christians, manifesting the spirit of little children, humble, unambitious, 1 John ii. 1, 12, 18, 28. 'It were better for him that a millstone,' &c. Mills anciently were either turned by hand, (note, Matt. xxiv. 41,) or by beasts, chiefly by mules. These latter were of the larger kind; and the original words denote that it was this kind that was intended. This was one mode of capital punishment practised by the Greeks, Syrians, Romans, and by some other surrounding nations. The meaning is, it would be better for him to die, before he had committed the sin.

7 ¶ Woe unto the world because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

'Woe unto the world because of offences.' That is, offences will be the cause of woe, or of suffering. Offences, here, mean things that will produce sin: that will cause any to sin, or temptations to induce any to sin. Note, Matt. v. 29. 'It must needs be,' &c. That is, such is the corruption of human nature, that there will be always some attempting to make others sin; and rejoicing when they have succeeded in causing them to fall. 'Woe to that man by whom the offence cometh.' He who draws others into sin is awfully guilty. That wickedness must be deeply seated in the heart, which induces any one to attempt to mar the peace, defile the purity, and destroy the souls of others.

8 Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. 9 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.

'If thy hand,' &c. See notes, Matt. v. 29, 30. The meaning of all these instances is the same. Whatever cannot be pursued without leading us into sin, must be abandoned, or the soul must be lost. 'It is better—to enter into life halt or maimed—or having one eye,' &c. These things are said for the purpose of carrying out or making complete the figure, or the representation of cutting off the hands, &c. The meaning is, it is better to be saved and go to heaven, without enjoying the things so dear to us, that caused us to sin, than to enjoy them here, and then be lost. 'Halt.' Lame. 'Maimed.' With a loss of limbs. 'Into hell fire.' It is implied in all this, that if this is not done, if their



beloved sins are not abandoned, the soul must be lost, or go into everlasting fire. See notes on Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

‘Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones,’ &c. That is, one who has become like little children—or a christian. ‘In heaven their angels do always behold his face.’ That is, the angels are the guards of his followers, and aid them, and watch over them, Heb. i. 14. They always ‘behold the face of God.’ This is taken from the practice of earthly courts. To be admitted to the presence of a king; to have free access at all times; was deemed a mark of peculiar favour, 1 Kings x. 8. Esther i. 14. So, says our Saviour, we should not despise the obscurest christians, for they are ministered to by the highest and noblest of beings; beings who are always enjoying the favour and friendship of God.

11 For the Son of man is come to save that which was lost.

This is a second reason why we should not despise christians, for the Son of man came to seek and save them. It was the great object of his life; and that cannot be worthy of contempt which the Son of God sought by his toils and his death. ‘Son of man.’ See note, Matt. viii. 19, 20. ‘That which was lost.’ A wicked and profligate man is said to be lost to virtue and happiness. He is useless to society. So all men are lost. They are wicked, miserable wanderers from God. They are lost to piety, to happiness, and heaven. These Jesus came to save by giving his own life a ransom, and shedding his own blood that they might be recovered and saved.

12 How think ye? If a man have a hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? 13 And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, He rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray. 14 Even so it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

To show still further the reason why we should not despise them, he introduces a parable. Man rejoices over the recovery of one of his flock that had wandered, more than over all the

remained. So God rejoices that man is restored, seeks his salvation, and wills that not one thus found should perish. If God thus loves and preserves the redeemed, then surely man should not despise them. See this passage further explained in Luke xv. 4—10.

15 ¶ Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

The word 'brother,' here, evidently means a fellow-professor of religion. Christians are called brethren because they belong to the same redeemed family—having a common Father, God, and being united in the same feelings, objects, and destiny. 'Trespass against thee.' That is, injure thee in any way, by words or conduct. 'Go and tell him his fault.' Seek an explanation of his conduct; and if he has done wrong, administer a friendly and brotherly reproof. This is required to be done alone, that he may have an opportunity of explaining it, or of acknowledging his offence, and making reparation, if he has done wrong. It should not be blazoned abroad. This can do no good. It does injury. It is what the enemies of religion wish. Christ is often wounded in the house of his friends; and religion, as well as an injured brother, suffers by spreading his faults before the world. 'Thou hast gained thy brother.' To gain, means, sometimes, to preserve, or to save, 1 Cor. ix. 19. Here it means, thou hast preserved him, or restored him, to be a consistent christian.

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

'If he will not hear thee,' &c. That is, if he spurns or abuses you, or will not be entreated by you, and will not reform. 'Take one or two more.' They should be persons of influence or authority; his personal friends, or those in whom he could put confidence. The law of Moses required two or three witnesses, Deut. xix. 15. 2 Cor. xiii. 1. John viii. 17.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

'Tell it unto the church.' See note Matt. xvi. 18. It was to be brought to the church, in order that he might be admonished, entreated, and if possible reformed. This was, and always should be, the first business in disciplining an offending brother. 'If he neglect to hear the church, let him be,' &c. The Jews gave the name heathen or Gentile to all other nations but themselves.

With them they had no religious intercourse or communion, 'Publican.' See note, Matt. v. 47. The meaning of this is, cease to have religious intercourse with him, to acknowledge him as a brother. Regard him as obstinate, self-willed, and guilty. It does not mean that we should cease to show kindness to him, and aid him in affliction or trial; for this is required towards all men.

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

See note, Matt. xvi. 19. These words were spoken to the apostles. Christ had used the same words to Peter, ch. xvi. 19. He used them here to signify that they all had the same power—that in ordering the affairs of the church he did not intend to give Peter any supremacy, or any exclusive right to regulate it.

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.

When two of you agree—have the same mind, feelings, and opinion, about the arrangement of affairs in the church, or about things desired for its welfare, and shall ask of God, it shall be done for them. See Acts i. 14—26; xv. 1—29. The promise has primary respect to the apostles in organizing the church. It may also be applied to the ordinary prayers of believers.

20 For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them.

This is a general assertion, made to support the particular promise made, ver. 19, to his apostles. He affirms that wherever two or three are assembled together in his name, he is in the midst of them. 'In my name.' That is, in the place of prayer and praise, assembled in obedience to my command, and with a desire to promote my glory. Every day, perhaps every hour, two or three, or many more, may be assembled in England, in Greenland, in Africa, in Ceylon, in America, in the Sandwich Islands, in Russia, and in Judea—in almost every part of the world—and in the midst of them all is Jesus the Saviour. Millions thus at the same time, in every quarter of the globe, worship in his name, and experience the truth of his promise to be present with them. It is impossible that he should be in all these places, and not be God.

21 ¶ Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? 22 Jesus saith unto him, I say not

unto thee, Until seven times: but, until seventy times seven.

'Forgive him?' To forgive is to treat as though the offence was not committed—to declare that we will not harbour malice, or act unkindly, but that the matter shall be buried and forgotten. 'Till seven times?' The Jews taught that a man was to forgive another three times, but not the fourth. Peter more than doubled this. 'Till seventy times seven.' The meaning is, that we are not to limit our forgiveness to any fixed number of times, See Gen. iv. 24. As often as a brother offends us, and injures us, and asks forgiveness, we are to forgive him.

23 Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

'Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened,' &c. It shall be in my church as it was with a certain king; or God will deal with the members of his church as a certain king did with his servants. 'Would take account of his servants.' To 'take account' means to reckon, to settle the affairs. 'Servants' here mean, probably, petty princes, or more likely, collectors of the revenue, or taxes. Among the ancients, kings often farmed out, or sold for a certain sum, the taxes of a particular province. Thus, when Judea was subject to Egypt, or Syria, or Rome, the kings frequently sold to the high priest the taxes to be raised from Judea, on condition of having a much smaller sum paid to them.

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

A talent was a sum of money, or weight of silver or gold, amounting to three thousand shekels. A silver shekel was worth a fraction more than two shillings and three pence of our money. A talent of silver was worth about 375*l.*; of gold, 5,475*l.* If these were silver talents, as is probable, then the sum owed by the servant was three millions, four hundred and twenty-one thousand, eight hundred and seventy-five pounds, a sum which proves that he was not a domestic, but some tributary prince. The sum is used to show that the debt was immensely large, and that our sins are so great that they cannot be estimated or numbered.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

*By the laws of the Hebrews, they were permitted to sell debtors, with their wives and children, into servitude for a certain time*



sufficient to pay the debt. See 2 Kings iv. 1. Lev. xxv. 39—46. Amos viii. 6.

We are not to interpret the circumstances of a parable too strictly. The statement about selling the wife and children is not to be taken literally, as if God was about to punish a child for the sins of a father; but it is a circumstance to make the story consistent; to explain why the servant was so anxious to obtain a delay of the time of payment.

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

‘The servant fell down and worshipped him.’ He prostrated himself before his lord, as is customary in all eastern nations, when subjects are in the presence of their king. See note, Matt. ii. 2.

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

This represents the mercy of God to men. They had sinned. They owed to God more than could be paid. They were about to be cast off. But God has mercy on them, and forgives them.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest. 29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all. 30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

‘He found a fellow-servant who owed him an hundred pence,’ or a hundred denarii. This debt was about three pounds, four shillings, and seven-pence; a very small sum compared with what had been forgiven to the first servant. Our Saviour, by this, meant to teach that the offences which our fellow-men commit against us are very small and insignificant, compared with our offences against God. Since God has forgiven us so much, we ought to forgive each other the small offences which are committed. ‘Took him by the throat.’ Took him in a violent and rough manner—half choked or throttled him.

31 So when his fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

*‘So when his fellow-servants,’ &c. This is a circumstance*

thrown into the story, for the sake of keeping or making a consistent narrative. It cannot be intended to teach that other christians should go and tell God what a brother had done; for God well knows all the actions of his children, and does not need us, surely, to inform him of what is done. It is abusing the bible, and departing from the design of parables to press every circumstance, and to endeavour to extract from it some spiritual meaning. Our Saviour, in this parable, designed most clearly to exhibit only one great truth—the duty of forgiving our brethren, and the great evil of not forgiving a brother when he offends us. The circumstances of the parable are intended only to make the story consistent with itself, and thus to impress the general truth more fully on the mind.

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: 33 Shouldst not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee? 34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

The word 'tormentors,' here probably means keepers of the prison. In the east, torments were inflicted on criminals, and sometimes even on debtors.

35 So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

This contains the sum or moral of the parable, and the truth taught in it. When Christ has explained one of his own parables, we are to receive it just as he has explained it. 'From your hearts.' That is, not merely in words, but really and truly to feel and act towards him as if he had not offended us. 'Trespasses.' Offences, injuries. Remarks and actions designed to do us wrong. Forgiveness must not be in word merely, but from the heart, ver. 35. No other can be genuine. No other is like that of God.

#### CHAPTER XIX.

AND it came to pass, *that* when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judea; beyond Jordan. 2 And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there.

See also Mark x. 1—12. 'Coasts of Judea beyond Jordan.' Probably our Saviour was then going from Galilee up to Jerusalem, to one of the great feasts of the Jews. Samaria was between Ga-

lilee and Jerusalem; and, choosing not to go through it, he crossed the Jordan, and passed down on the east side of it, through Peræa, formerly a part of the tribes Reuben, Gad, and Manasseh. See the map.

3 ¶ The pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

'Tempting him.' This means, to get him, if possible, to express an opinion that should involve him in difficulty. There was the more art in this captious question which they proposed, as at that time the people were very much divided on the subject. A part, following the opinions of Hillel, said that a man might divorce his wife for any offence, or any dislike he might have of her. Note, Matt. v. 31. Others, of the school of Shammai, maintained that divorce was unlawful, except in case of adultery. Whatever opinion, therefore, Christ expressed, they expected that he would involve himself in difficulty with one of their parties.

4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning, made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

'And he answered and said,' &c. Instead of referring to the opinions of either party, Jesus called their attention to the original design of marriage, to the authority of Moses, an authority acknowledged by them both. 'Have ye not read,' Gen. i. 27; ii. 21, 22. 'And said, For this cause,' &c. Gen. ii. 24. That is, God at the beginning made but one man and one woman; their posterity should learn from this the intention of marriage, and that it was the original design that a man should have but one wife. 'Shall leave his father and mother.' This means, shall bind himself more strongly to his wife than he was bound to his parents. 'And shall cleave unto his wife.' The word 'cleave' denotes a union of the firmest kind, so firmly to adhere that nothing can separate them. 'They twain shall be one flesh.' That is, they two, or that were two, shall be united as one—one in law, in feeling, interest, and affection. They shall no longer have separate interests, but shall act in all things as if they were one—animated by one soul and one wish. The argument of Jesus here is, since they are so intimately united as to be one, and since in the beginning God made but one woman for one man, &

follows that they cannot be separated but by the authority of God. In this decision Christ showed consummate wisdom. He answered the question, not from Hillel or Shammai, their teachers, but from Moses; and thus defeated the malice of his enemies.

7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? 8 He saith unto them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

See note, Matt. v. 31. Jesus admits that divorce was allowed; but still he contends that this was not the original design of marriage. It was only a temporary expedient, growing out of a peculiar state of things, and not designed to be perpetual. It was on account of the hardness of their hearts. Moses found the custom in use. In this state of things he did not deem it prudent to attempt to forbid a practice so universal; but instead of suffering the husband to divorce his wife in a passion, he required him, in order that he might take time to consider the matter, to give her a writing, to do it deliberately, and probably also to bring the case before some scribe or learned man, to write a divorce in the legal form. Thus doing, there might be an opportunity that the matter might be reconciled, and the man be persuaded not to divorce his wife. But at first it was not so, 'Hardness of your hearts.' He speaks here of his hearers as a part of the nation. The hardness of you Jews: the national hardness of heart, the cruelty of the Jewish people as a people.

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her which is put away, doth commit adultery.

'And I say unto you.' Emphasis should be laid here on the word 'I.' This was the opinion of Jesus—this he proclaimed to be the law of his kingdom—this the command of God ever afterwards. Indulgence had been given by the laws of Moses; but that indulgence was to cease, and the marriage relation to be brought back again to its original intention. Only one offence was to make divorce lawful. Legislatures have no right to say that men may put away their wives for any other cause; and where they do, and where there is marriage afterwards, by the law of God such marriages are adulterous.

10 ¶ His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with *his* wife, it is not good to marry.



The disciples thought that the divorcing a wife when there was a quarrelsome disposition, or any thing else that rendered the marriage unhappy, was a great privilege.

11 But he said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

'This saying' evidently means what the disciples had just said, that it was good for a man not to marry. It might be good in certain circumstances, in times of persecution and trial, or for the sake of labouring in the cause of religion, without the care and burden of a family; but it was not given to all men, 1 Cor. vii. 1, 7, 9, 26.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

Jesus proceeds to state that there were some who were able to receive that saying, and to remain in an unmarried state; and some who voluntarily abstained from marriage for the kingdom of heaven's sake—that is, that they might devote themselves entirely to the proper business of religion. In eastern countries, eunuchs rose often to distinction, and held important offices in the state, Acts viii. 27.

13 ¶ Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

'Then were brought little children.' See also Mark x. 13—16. Luke xviii. 15—17. Luke says they were infants. They were those who were not old enough to come by choice, but their coming was an act of the parents. 'Put his hands on them and pray.' It was customary among the Jews, when blessings were sought by others in prayer, to lay the hands on the head of the person prayed for, implying a kind of consecration to God. See Gen. xlviii. 14. Matt. ix. 18. 'The disciples rebuked them.' That is, reproved them, or told them it was improper. They thought that it would be troublesome to their master.

14 But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

'Jesus said, Suffer little children,' &c. Mark adds, he was much displeased at what the disciples said. It was a thing highly

gratifying to him, and a case where it was very improper that they should interfere. 'Of such is the kingdom of heaven.' In Mark and Luke it is said he immediately added, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall not enter therein.' Whosoever shall not be humble, unambitious, and docile, shall not be a true follower of Christ, or a member of his kingdom. 'Of such as these'—that is, of persons with such tempers as these—is the church to be composed.

15 And he laid *his* hands on them, and departed thence.

Mark says he blessed them. That is, he pronounced or prayed for a blessing on them.

16 ¶ And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?

This account is found also in Mark x. 17—31. Luke xviii. 18—30. 'One came.' This was a young man, ver. 20. He was a ruler; (Luke;) probably a ruler in a synagogue, or of the great council of the nation. He came running, (Mark,) evincing great earnestness and anxiety. He fell upon his knees, (Mark,) to pay the customary respectful salutation; exhibiting the highest regard for Jesus as an extraordinary religious teacher. 'Good Master.' The word 'good' here means, doubtless, most excellent; referring not so much to the moral character of Jesus as to his character as a religious teacher. The word 'master' here means teacher. 'What good thing shall I do?' He had attempted to keep all the commandments. He had been taught by his Jewish teachers that men were to be saved by their works; and he supposed that this was to be the way under every system of religion. The happiness of heaven is called 'life,' in opposition to the pains of hell, called death, or an eternal dying, Rev. ii. 2; xx. 14. The one is real life, answering the purposes of living—living to the honour of God, and in eternal happiness; the other is a failure of the great ends of existence—prolonged, eternal suffering—of which temporal death is but the feeble image.

17 And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God:* but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.

'Why callest thou me good?' Why do you give to me a title that belongs only to God? You suppose me to be only a man. Yet you give me an appellation that belongs only to God. The habit of using mere titles, and applying as compliments terms belonging only to God, is wrong. Christ did not intend here to disclaim divinity, but simply to reprove the intention and habit of the young man, a foolish habit of compliment and flattery.

'Keep the commandments.' That is, do what God has commanded. Jesus said this, doubtless, to try him, and to convince him that he had by no means kept the commandments; and that in supposing he had, he was altogether deceived. It was of great importance, therefore, to convince him that he was, after all, a sinner. Christ did not mean to say any man would be saved by the works of the law, for the bible teaches plainly that such will not be the case, Rom. iii. 20—28; iv. 6. Gal. ii. 16. Eph. ii. 9. 2 Tim. i. 9. At the same time, however, it is true that if a man perfectly complied with the requirements of the law, he would be saved; for there would be no reason why he should be condemned. Jesus, therefore, since he saw this man depending on his works, told him that if he would enter life he must keep the commandments; he must keep them perfectly; and if this was done, he would be saved.

18 He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, 19 Honour thy father and *thy* mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

In reply to the inquiry of the young man, Jesus directed him to the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and fifth, Ex. xx. 12—16. as containing the substance of the whole. See notes Matt. v. 21—27. To this he added another—the duty of loving our neighbour, Lev. xix. 18. This Christ declared to be the second great commandment of the law, Matt. xxii. 39. 'A neighbour' means any person with whom we have dealing—friend, relative, countryman, or foe, Luke x. 27—37. This commandment means evidently, that we should not injure our neighbour in his person, property, or character; that we should seek to do him good, regarding his interest as much as our own, and not being influenced by a love of self; that in order to benefit him we should practise self-denial, or do as we would wish him to do to us, Matt. vii. 12. It does not mean, that love of ourselves, according to what we are, or according to truth, is improper. A man's own happiness is of as much importance as that of any others; and it is as proper that it should be sought. Neither does it mean that he is to neglect his own business to take care of his neighbours. His happiness, salvation, health, and family are peculiarly his care; and provided he does not interfere with his neighbour's rights, or violate his obligations to him, it is his duty to seek the welfare of his own as his first duty, 1 Tim. v. 8, 13. Titus ii. 5.

20 The young man saith unto him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?

I have made these the rule of my life. I have endeavoured to

obey them. Are there any new commandments to be kept? you, the Messiah, teach any new commands, besides those which I have learned from the law, and from the Jewish teachers?

21 Jesus said unto him, If thou wilt be perfect, *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come *and* follow me.

The word 'perfect' means complete in all its parts—finished, having no part wanting, &c. Job was said to be perfect, Job 1; not that he was sinless, for he is afterwards reproved by himself, Job xxxviii. xxxix. xl. 4; but because his piety was proportioned, had a completeness of parts. He was a pious man, a pious magistrate, a pious neighbour, a pious citizen. Religion was not confined to one thing, but extended to all. Matt. v. 48.

Mark says, v. 21, 'Jesus, beholding him, loved him.' Jesus was pleased with his amiableness, his correct character, his genuineness. Jesus, as a man, was capable of all the emotions of most tender friendship; his disposition was affectionate, warm, and calm. Hence he loved with peculiar affection the disciple John, eminently endowed with these qualities. And hence Jesus was pleased with the same traits in this young man. Still, there is reason to think the love of mere amiable qualities was all affection bestowed on him by the Saviour.

'One thing,' adds Mark, 'thou lackest.' There is one thing wanting. You are not complete. This done, you would show your obedience lacked no essential part, but was complete, finished, proportionate, perfect. 'Go and sell that thou hast,' said Jesus. The young man attested that he had kept the law. That law required, among other things, that he should love his neighbour as himself. It required also that he should love the Lord his God supremely; that is, more than all other objects. If he had true love to God and man, he would be willing to give up all wealth to the service of God and of man. Jesus commanded him to do this, therefore, to test his character, and to show him that he had not kept the law as he pretended; and thus to show him that he needed a better righteousness than his own. 'Treasure up thyself in heaven.' See note Matt. vi. 20. 'Follow me.' To follow Jesus then, meant to be a personal attendant on his ministry; to be about with him from place to place, as well as to imitate and obey him.

22 But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

'He had great possessions.' He was very rich. He made an idol of his riches. He loved them more than God. He had not



the commandments from his youth up, nor had he kept them at all. And rather than do good with his treasures, he chose to turn away from the Saviour, and give over his inquiry about eternal life. Alas, how many lovely and amiable young persons follow his example!

23 ¶ Then said Jesus unto his disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a rich man shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.

‘Shall hardly enter into the kingdom of heaven.’ Shall with difficulty be saved. His temptations and idols will prove great obstacles in his way, and to overcome them will be a most arduous work.

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. 25 When his disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? 26 But Jesus beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with God all things are possible.

It was a proverb in common use among the Jews, and still common among the Arabians, to denote that a thing was impossible, or exceedingly difficult, to say that a camel or an elephant might as soon walk through a needle’s eye. ‘A camel.’ A beast of burden, much used in eastern countries. It is about the size of the largest ox, with one or two bunches on his back, with long neck and legs, no horns, and with feet adapted to the hot and dry sand. Camels are capable of carrying heavy burdens; will travel sometimes faster than the fleetest horse; and are provided with a peculiar stomach which they fill with water, by means of which they can live four or five days without drink. They are very mild and tame, and kneel down to receive and unload their burden. They are chiefly used in deserts and hot climates, where other beasts of burden are with difficulty kept alive. ‘A rich man.’ Mark says, ‘them that trust in riches.’ While he has this feeling, it is literally impossible that he should be a christian. For religion is the love of God, rather than the world; the love of Jesus and his cause, more than gold. The difficulties in the way of salvation for a rich man are many; riches engross the affections. Men consider wealth as the chief good; and when this is obtained, think they have gained all. They are proud of their wealth, and unwilling to be numbered with the poor and despised followers of Jesus. Riches often produce luxury, and dissipation, and vice, and are frequently obtained by covetousness, fraud, and oppression, 1 Tim. vi. 9, 10, 17. James v. 1—5. Luke

xii. 16—21; xvi. 19—31. Still Jesus says, ver. 26, all these may be overcome. God can give grace to do it.

27 ¶ Then answered Peter, and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore?

'We have forsaken all.' Probably nothing but their fishing nets, small boats, and cottages. But these were their all: their living, their home. And forsaking them, they had as really shown their sincerity, as though they had possessed the gold of Ophir, and dwelt in the palaces of kings, and had forsaken it all. 'What shall we have therefore?' We have done as thou didst command this young man to do. What reward may we expect for it?

28 And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

Jesus in this verse declares the reward which they would have. They were not to look for it now, but in a future period. 'In the regeneration.' This word occurs but once elsewhere in the New Testament, Titus iii. 5. It literally means a new birth, or being born again. The word also means any great changes, or restoration of things to a former state, or to a better state. In this sense it is used here. It refers to that great revolution; that restoration of order in the universe; that universal new birth when the dead shall rise, and all human things shall be changed, when the Son of man shall come to judgment. 'When the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory.' That is, to judge the world. 'Throne of glory' means glorious throne, or a splendid throne. It is used to denote his character as a King and Judge, and to signify the great dignity and majesty which will be displayed by him. See Matt. xxiv. 30; xxvi. 64. Acts i. 11; xvii. 31. 'Sit upon twelve thrones.' This is figurative. To sit on a throne denotes power and honour; and means here that they should be distinguished above others, be more highly honoured and rewarded. 'Judging the twelve tribes of Israel.' As earthly kings have those around them dignified with honours and office, counsellors and judges, so Christ says his apostles shall occupy the same relative station in the great day. They shall be honoured by him, and by all, as apostles; as having in the face of persecution left all; as having laid the foundations of his church, and endured all the dreadful persecutions of the world. 'The twelve tribes of Israel.' This was the number of the ancient tribes. By this name the people of God were denoted. By this name Jesus here denotes his redeemed people. Among them Jesus says his apostles shall be honoured in the day of judgment,

as earthly kings place in posts of office and honour the counsellors and judges who have signally served them.

29 And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.

'Forsaken houses,' &c. In our times it does not often mean that we should literally leave them, except when the life is devoted to Christ among the heathen, but that we are to love them less than we do him; that we give up all that is inconsistent with religion; and be ready to give up all when he demands it. 'For my name's sake.' From attachment to me. Mark adds, 'and for the gospel's;' that is, from obedience to the requirements of the gospel, and love for the service of the gospel. 'Shall receive a hundred fold.' Mark says, 'a hundred fold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters,' &c. 'A hundred fold' means a hundred times as much. It does not mean literally, but that he will give what will be worth a hundred times as much, in the peace, and joy, and rewards of religion. Mark adds, 'with persecutions.' These are not promised as a part of the reward; but amidst their trials and persecutions, they should find reward and peace. This is the testimony of all christians of all denominations; of all that have lived, and of all that do live; that they never knew true peace, till they found it in the gospel. The testimony of so many must be true. They have tried the world in all its forms of gaiety, folly, and vice, and they come and say with one voice, Here only is true peace. On any other subject, they would be believed. Their testimony here must be true.

30 But many *that are first* shall be last; and the last *shall be first*.

This verse should have been connected with the following chapter. The parable there spoken is expressly to illustrate this sentiment. See its meaning, ch. xx. 16.

## CHAPTER XX.

1 FOR the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into his vineyard.

'For the kingdom of heaven,' &c. The word 'for' shows that this chapter should have been connected with the preceding. The parable was spoken expressly to illustrate the sentiment in the last verse of that chapter. The meaning may be thus expressed; Rewards shall be bestowed in my kingdom, or on my followers in the same manner as they were by a certain house-

holder, in such a way as that the last shall be equal to the first, and the first last. 'A householder.' A master of a family. 'His vineyard.' A considerable part of Judea was employed in the culture of the grape. Vineyards are often used to represent a fertile or well cultivated place; and hence the church, denoting the care and culture that God has bestowed on it, Isa. v. 7. Jer. xii. 10. For the manner of their formation, see Matt. xxi. 33.

2 And when he had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, he sent them into his vineyard.

'A penny a day.' See note on Matt. xviii. 28. It was probably at that time the price of a day's labour. This was the common wages of a Roman soldier. But provisions were of course proportionally cheap; and the value of a man's labour in articles of food was nearly as much as it is now.

3 And he went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place. 4 And said unto them; Go ye also into the vineyard, and whatsoever is right, I will give you. And they went their way.

'About the third hour.' The Jews divided their days into twelve equal parts, or hours, beginning at sunrise, and ending at sunset. This was, therefore, about nine o'clock in the morning. 'Standing idle in the market-place.' Of course many resort to such places; and it would be the readiest place to meet persons, and find employers. They were waiting there to find employers.

'Whatsoever is right.' Whatsoever it shall appear you can earn. The contract with the first was definite; with these depended on the judgment of the employer.

5 Again he went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

'The sixth and ninth hour.' That is, about twelve and three o'clock.

6 And about the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? 7 They say unto him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.

'The eleventh hour.' About five o'clock in the afternoon; or when there was but one working hour of the day left.



8 So when even was come, the lord of the vineyard saith unto his steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

'When even was come.' That is, when the twelfth hour was come; the day was ended, and the time of payment was come. 'The steward.' He was one who had the administration of affairs in the absence of the householder; who provided for the family; and who was intrusted with the payment of labourers and others. He was commonly the most trusty and faithful of the servants, raised to that station as a reward for his fidelity. 'Beginning from the last unto the first.' It was immaterial where he began to pay, provided he dealt justly by them. In the parable, this order is mentioned to give opportunity for the remarks which follow. Had those first hired been first paid, they would have departed satisfied, and the point of the parable would have been lost.

9 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny.

'They received every man a penny.' There was no agreement how much they should receive, but merely that justice should be done, ver. 4, 5, 7. The householder chose to make a present to them.

10 But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

They had worked longer; they had been in the heat; they supposed that it was his intention to pay them more than according to contract.

11 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the good man of the house,

'The good man of the house.' That is, the householder. It is the old English way of denoting the father of a family.

12 Saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

The 'burden' means the heavy labour, the severe toil. We have continued at that toil, in the heat of the day. The others had worked only a little while, and that in the cool of the evening, or while the sun was going down.

13 But he answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with me for a penny?

Saviour, and this treatment, and his death, had been predicted in many places. See Isa. liii. Dan. ix. 26, 27.

20 ¶ Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping *him*, and desiring a certain thing of him.

See also Mark x. 35—45. 'The mother of Zebedee's children,' &c. This was probably Salome, Mark xv. 40; xvi. 1. 'With her sons.' The names of these sons were James and John, Mark x. 35. Mark says they came and made the request. That is, they made it through the medium of their mother; they requested her to ask it for them. 'Worshipping him.' See note, Matt. viii. 2.

21 And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She said unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom.

They were still looking for a temporal kingdom. To sit on the right and left hand of a prince was a token of confidence, and the highest honour granted to his friends, 1 Kings ii. 19. Ps. cx. 1. 1 Sam. xx. 25.

22 But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able.

'Ye know not what ye ask.' You do not know the nature of your request, nor what would be involved in it. You suppose that it would be only honour and happiness if the request was granted; whereas, it would require much suffering and trial. 'Are ye able to drink of the cup,' &c. To drink of a cup often, in the scriptures, signifies, to be afflicted, or sometimes to be punished, Isa. li. 17, 22. Ps. lxxv. 8. The figure is taken from a feast—the master of a feast extending a cup to those present. See John xviii. 11. 'The baptism that I am baptized with.' This is evidently a phrase denoting the same thing. Are ye able to suffer with me—to endure the trials and pains which shall come upon you and me in endeavouring to build up my kingdom? Afflictions are often expressed by being sunk in the floods, and plunged in the deep waters, Ps. lxix. 2. Isa. xliii. 2. Ps. cxxiv. 4, 5. Lam. iii. 54.

23 And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but *if shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of my Father.

You are truly attached to me. You will follow me, and you will partake of my afflictions, and will suffer as I shall. This was fulfilled. James was slain with the sword by Herod, Acts xii. 2. John lived many years. But he attended the Saviour through his sufferings, and was himself banished to Patmos, a solitary island, for the testimony of Jesus Christ—a companion of others in tribulation, Rev. i. 9. 'Is not mine to give,' &c. The correct translation of the passage would be, 'To sit on my right hand and on my left is not mine to give, except to those for whom it is prepared of my Father.' It thus declares that Christ would give rewards to his followers; but only to such as should be entitled to them according to the purpose of his Father. Much as he might be attached to these two disciples, yet he could not bestow any such signal favours on them out of the regular course of rewards, Matt. xxv. 34. The correct sense is seen by leaving out that part of the verse in *italics*, which is not in the original.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren.

'The ten heard it.' That is, the ten other apostles. 'They were moved with indignation.' They were offended at their ambition, at their desire to be exalted above their brethren.

25 But Jesus called them *unto him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. 26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; 27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

The kings of the earth raise their favourites to posts of trust and power. They give authority to some over others. But my kingdom is established in a different manner. The rich, the poor, the learned, the unlearned, the bond, the free, are to be equal. He will be the most distinguished that shows most humility, the deepest sense of his unworthiness, and the most earnest desire to promote the welfare of his brethren. 'Your Minister.' Your servant. Preachers of the gospel are called ministers because they are the servants of God and the church, 1 Cor. iii. 5; iv. 1. 2 Cor. iii. 6; vi. 4. Eph. iv. 12; an office, therefore, which forbids them to lord it over God's heritage; which is the very opposite of a station of superiority, and which demands the greatest degree of humility.

28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

See note, Matt. viii. 20. Jesus points them to his own example. He was in the form of God in heaven, Phil. ii. 6. He came in the form of a servant, Phil. ii. 7. And since he came, he had not required them to minister to him. He laboured for them. He strove to do them good. He provided for their wants, fared as poorly as they did, went before them in dangers and sufferings, practised self-denial on their account, and was about to lay down his life for them. See John xiii. 4, 5. 'To give his life a ransom for many.' In war, when prisoners are taken by an enemy, the money demanded for their release is called a ransom. That is, it is the means by which they are set at liberty. So any thing that releases any one from a state of punishment, or suffering, or sin, is called a ransom. Men are by nature captives to sin. They are sold under it. They are under condemnation, Eph. ii. 3. Rom. iii. 9—20, 23. 1 John v. 19. They are under a curse, Gal. iii. 10. They are in love with sin. They are under its withering dominion, and are exposed to death eternal, Ezek. xviii. 4. Ps. ix. 17; xi. 6; lxviii. 2; cxxxix. 19. Matt. xxv. 46. Rom. ii. 6—9. They must have perished unless there had been some way by which they could be rescued. This was done by the death of Jesus, by giving his life a ransom. The meaning is, that he died in the place of sinners, and that God was willing to accept the pains of his death in the place of the eternal suffering of the redeemed. See John iii. 16. 1 John iv. 10. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. Rev. xiii. 8. John i. 29. Eph. v. 2. Heb. vii. 27. Isa. liii. This is commonly called the atonement. 'For many.' See also Matt. xxvi. 28. John x. 15. 1 Tim. ii. 6. 1 John ii. 2. 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Heb. ii. 9.

29 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed him.

See Mark x. 46—52. Luke xviii. 35—43; xix. 1; where this account of his restoring to sight two blind men is also recorded. 'And as they departed from Jericho.' This was a large town on the west bank of the Jordan, about nineteen miles north-east from Jerusalem. In point of size it was second only to Jerusalem. It was sometimes called the city of palm-trees, from the many palms in the vicinity, 2 Chron. xxviii. 15. Judges i. 16; iii. 13. It is now a small village, wretched in its appearance, and inhabited by a very few persons, and called Riha. Jesus was going to Jerusalem. He had left Samaria, and crossed the Jordan, ch. xix. 1. His regular journey was therefore through Jericho. 'As they departed from Jericho.' Luke says, 'As he was come nigh unto Jericho.' The original word would be here rendered correctly, 'when they were near to Jericho,' or when they were in the vicinity of it, without saying whether they were going to it or from it. Matthew and Mark say they were going from it. The passage in Luke xix. 1. 'And Jesus entered and passed through



Jericho,' might be intended to be connected with the account of Zaccheus, and not to denote the order of time in which these events took place; but simply that as he was passing through Jericho, Zaccheus sought to see him, and invited him to his house. The main facts of the narrative are the same, and such variations of circumstances and order, where there is no palpable contradiction, show the honesty of the writers; show that they did not conspire together to deceive, and are confirmations of the truth of their testimony.

30 ¶ And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that Jesus passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

'Two blind men.' Mark and Luke mention but one. His name was Bartimeus. Bar is a Syriac word, meaning son; and the name means, therefore, the son of Timeus. Probably Timeus was a man of note; and as the case of his son attracted most attention, Mark and Luke recorded it particularly. 'Heard that Jesus passed by.' They learned who he was by inquiring. They heard a noise, and asked who it was. (Luke.) They had doubtless heard much of his fame, and so were therefore earnest in calling upon him. 'Son of David.' That is, Messiah, or Christ. This was the name by which the Messiah was commonly known. He was the descendant of David; he to whom a perpetual throne was promised. See note, Matt. i. 1.

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, *thou* Son of David.

'And the multitude rebuked them,' &c. They chid or re-proved them, and in a threatening manner told them to be silent. 'They cried the more.' Jesus, standing still, ordered them to be brought to him. (Mark.) They then addressed the blind men, and told them that Jesus called them. Mark adds, that Bartimeus cast away his garment, and rose and came to Jesus. The garment was not his only raiment, but was the outer garment, thrown loosely over him, and commonly laid aside when persons laboured or ran. See note, Matt. v. 40.

32 And Jesus stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? 33 They say unto him, Lord, that our eyes may be opened. 34 So Jesus had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed him.

'And touched their eyes.' Mark and Luke say, he added, 'Thy  
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faith hath saved thee.' Thy confidence, belief that I could cure, has been the means of obtaining this blessing. Faith had no power to open the eyes, but it led them to Jesus; it showed that they had just views of his power; it was connected with the cure. So faith has no power to save from sin, but it leads the poor, lost, blind sinner to Him who has power, and in this sense, it is said, we are saved by faith: his touching their eyes was merely a sign that the power of healing proceeded from him.

Here was an undoubted miracle. These blind men were well known. One at least had been long blind. They were strangers to Jesus. They could not have, therefore, feigned themselves blind. The miracle was wrought in the presence of multitudes, who took a deep interest in it, and who could easily have detected the imposition if there had been one. The men followed him. They praised or glorified God. (Mark and Luke.) The people gave praise to God also. (Luke.) They were satisfied that a real miracle was performed. He that can give sight to the blind cannot lead us astray. He that can shed light in the beginning of our faith, can enlighten our goings through all our pilgrimage, and down through the dark valley of the shadow of death.

## CHAPTER XXI.

1 AND when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the mount of Olives, then sent Jesus two disciples,

See also Mark xi. 1—11. Luke xix. 29—44. They were going up now from Jericho, ch. xx. 29. The distance was about nineteen miles. The mount of Olives, or Olivet, is on the east of Jerusalem. Between this and Jerusalem there runs a small stream called the brook Kidron, or Cedron. It is dry in the hot seasons of the year, but swells to a considerable size during heavy rains. The valley through which this passes is called the valley of Jehoshaphat, or the valley of Hinnom. See note, Matt. v. 22. The mount of Olives was so called from its producing in abundance the olive. It was from Jerusalem about a sabbath day's journey, or a mile, Acts i. 12. On the west side of the mountain was the garden of Gethsemane, Luke xxii. 39. Mark xiv. 32. On the east side of the mountain, probably at its base, were the villages of Bethphage and Bethany. Mark and Luke say that he came near to both those places. The mount of Olives is about a mile in length, and overlooks Jerusalem; so that from its summit almost every part of the city can be seen.

2 Saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose them, and bring them unto me.

The village here meant was not far from Bethany, and about

two miles east of Jerusalem. (Mark and Luke.) He had lodged at Bethany the night before, and in the morning sent his disciples to the village over against them; that is, to Bethphage, John xii. 1—12. 'Ye shall find an ass tied,' &c. In Judea there were few horses, and those were chiefly used in war. Men seldom employed them in common life, and in ordinary journeys. The ass, the mule, and the camel are still most used in eastern countries. To ride on a horse was sometimes an emblem of war: a mule and an ass the emblem of peace. Kings and princes commonly rode on them in times of peace; and it is mentioned as a mark of rank and dignity to ride in that manner, Judges x. 4; xii. 14. 1 Sam. xxv. 20. So Solomon, when he was inaugurated as king, rode on a mule, 1 Kings i. 33.

Mark and Luke say that he told them they should find a colt tied. This they were directed to bring. They mention only the colt, because it was this on which he rode.

3 And if any *man* say ought unto you, ye shall say, the Lord hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

'The Lord hath need of them.' This means, the master has need of him. The word 'Lord' often means master, as opposed to servant, Matt. x. 24. Eph. vi 5. 1 Pet. iii. 5, 6. The word is sometimes used in the bible as applied to God, or as a translation of the name Jehovah. Its common use is as a title of respect given by an inferior to a superior, by a servant to a master, by a disciple to a teacher. As a title of high respect it was given to Christ, or the Messiah. The persons to whom these disciples were sent, were probably acquainted with the miracles of Jesus, and favourably disposed towards him.

4 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, 5 Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

The prophecy here quoted is found in Zech. ix. 9. It was always, by the Jews, applied to the Messiah. 'Daughter of Zion.' That is, Jerusalem. Zion was one of the hills on which the city of Jerusalem was built. On this stood the city of David and some strong fortresses. The names daughter and virgin were given to it often, in accordance with the oriental figurative manner of expression, Amos v. 2. Ps. cxxxvii. 8. Isa. xlvii. 1. 'Meek.' See note, Matt. v. 5. The expression here rather denotes peaceful, not warlike; not with pomp and state, and the ensigns of ambition. 'Sitting upon an ass,' &c. He rode on the colt. (Mark and Luke.) This expression in Matthew is one which is common with all writers. See Gen. xix. 29. Judges xii. 7.

6 And the disciples went, and did as Jesus commanded them, 7 And brought the ass, and the colt, and put on them their clothes, and they set *him* thereon.

'And put on them their clothes.' This was done as a token of respect, 2 Kings ix. 13.

8 And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed *them* in the way.

Others showed the same respect by throwing their garments before him; others by cutting down branches of trees, and casting them in the way. This was the way in which conquerors and princes were often honoured. To cast flowers or garlands, or boughs, before a warrior returning from victory, or a king entering into his kingdom, was a common way of testifying joyful and triumphant feeling. John says, xii. 13, that these branches were branches of the palm-tree. The palm was an emblem of joy and victory, Rev. vii. 9.

The palm-tree is common in warm climates, and was abundant in Palestine. The finest grew about Jericho and Engeddi. Hence Jericho was called the city of palm-trees.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

The word 'hosanna' means Save now, or save, I beseech thee. It is a Syriac word, and was the form of acclamation used among the Jews. It was probably used in the celebration of their great festivals. During those festivals they sang the 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th psalms. In the chanting or singing of those psalms, the Jewish writers inform us that the people responded frequently hallelujah, or hosanna. 'Son of David.' The Messiah. 'Blessed is he,' &c. That is, blessed be the Messiah. This passage is taken from Ps. cxviii. 25, 26. To come in the name of the Lord, is to come by the authority of the Lord; to come commissioned by him to reveal his will. The Jews had commonly applied this to the Messiah. 'Hosanna in the highest.' This may mean either Hosanna in the highest, loftiest strains, or it may be a prayer to God, 'Save now, O thou that dwellest in the highest, in the highest heaven, or among the highest angels.'

Mark adds, that they shouted, 'Blessed be the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord.' That is, the kingdom promised to David, 1 Kings ii. 4; viii. 25.

Luke adds, xix. 38, that they said 'Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.' The word peace is used here as significant of joy



—joy, triumph, exultation in heaven at this event; increased rejoicing from the accession of the redeemed: and the highest glory to God.

Among such a multitude the shouts of exultation and triumph would by no means be confined to the same words. Some would say one thing, and some another; one evangelist recorded what was said by one part of the multitude, and another what was said by another part.

10 And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this? 11 And the multitude said, This is Jesus, the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

There was great excitement. The sight of such a multitude, the shouts of the people, and the triumphant procession through the city, excited much attention and inquiry.

12 ¶ And Jesus went into the temple of God, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money changers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

The account of the barren fig-tree and of the cleansing of the temple is stated in Mark xi. 12—19. See also Luke xix. 45—48. From Mark xi. 11—15, it is probable that this cleansing of the temple did not take place on the day that he entered Jerusalem in triumph, but on the day following. He came and looked round upon all things, Mark says, and went out to Bethany with the twelve. On the day following, returning from Bethany, he saw the fig-tree. Entering into the temple, he purified it on that day; or perhaps he finished the work of purifying it on that day, which he commenced the day before.

The temple was built on mount Moriah. The first temple was built by Solomon, about 1000 years before Christ, 1 Kings vi. He was seven years in building it, 1 Kings vi. 38. This temple, erected with great magnificence, remained till it was destroyed by the Chaldeans under Nebuchadnezzar, five hundred and eighty-four years before Christ, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 6, 7, 19.

After the Babylonish captivity, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel, but with vastly inferior and diminished beauty. This was called the second temple. It was often defiled in the wars before the time of Christ, and had become much decayed and impaired. Herod the Great, being exceedingly unpopular among the Jews, on account of his cruelties, (see note, Matt. ii.) was desirous of doing something to obtain the favour of the people, and accordingly about sixteen years before Christ, he commenced the work of repairing it. This he did, by removing one part after another till it had become in fact a new temple, greatly surpassing

the former in magnificence. It was still called by the Jews the second temple; and by Christ's coming to this temple, the prophecy, Haggai ii. 9, was fulfilled. John says, ii. 20, 'forty and six years was this temple in building.' Christ was then thirty years of age, which, added to the sixteen years occupied in repairing it before his birth, makes forty-six years.

The temple itself was a small edifice, and was surrounded by courts and chambers half a mile in circumference. Into the sacred edifice itself our Saviour never went. He was not a priest, and consequently was allowed to enter no further into the temple than the other Israelites. The works that he is said to have performed in the temple, therefore, are to be understood as having been performed in the courts surrounding the sacred edifice. Those courts will now be described.

The entrance to the courts on the top of the mount was by nine gates, all of them extremely splendid. On every side they were thickly coated with gold and silver. But there was one gate of peculiar magnificence. This was called the beautiful gate, Acts iii. 2. It was on the east side, and was made of Corinthian brass, one of the most precious metals in ancient times. This gate was fifty cubits, or seventy-five feet in height.

The whole temple, with all its courts, was surrounded by a wall about twenty-five feet in height. On the inside of this wall, between the gates, were piazzas or covered porches. On the eastern, northern, and western sides there were two rows of these porches; on the south, three. These porches were covered walks, about twenty feet in width, paved with marble of different colours, with a flat roof of costly cedar, which was supported by pillars of solid marble, so large that three men could scarcely stretch their arms so as to meet around them. These walks or porches afforded a grateful shade and protection to the people in hot or stormy weather. The one on the east side was distinguished for its beauty, and was called Solomon's porch, John x. 23. Acts iii. 11. It stood over the vast terrace or wall which he had raised from the valley beneath, and which was the only thing of his work that remained in the sacred temple.

When a person entered any of the gates into this space within the wall, he saw the temple rising before him with great magnificence. But the space was not clear all the way up to it. Going forward, he came to another wall, inclosing considerable ground, esteemed more holy than the rest of the hill. This between the first and second wall was called the court of the Gentiles. It was so called because Gentiles might come into it, but they could proceed no further. This court was not of equal dimensions all the way round the temple. On the east, north, and west, it was quite narrow. On the south it was wide, occupying nearly half of the whole surface of the hill. In this court the Gentiles might come. Here was the place where much secular business was

transacted. This was occupied by the buyers and sellers, and the money changers, and Jesus purified it by casting them out.

The inclosure within the second wall was nearly twice as long from east to west as from north to south. This inclosure was also divided. The eastern part of it was called the court of the women; so called because women might advance thus far, but no further. It was entered by three gates: one on the north, one on the east, directly opposite to the beautiful gate, and one on the south. This court of the women was inclosed with a double wall, with a space between the walls about fifteen feet in width, paved with marble. In the corners of that court were different structures for the various uses of the temple. It was in this court that the Jews commonly worshipped. Here, probably, Peter and John, with others, went up to pray, Acts iii. 1. Here too the pharisee prayed; the publican standing far off in the outer court, Luke xviii. 9—14. Paul also was seized here, and charged with defiling the temple, by bringing Gentiles into that holy place, Acts xxi. 26—30.

A high wall on the west side of the court of the women divided it from the court of the Israelites; so called because all the males of the Jews might advance there. To this court there was an ascent of fifteen steps. These steps were in the form of a half circle.

Within the court of the Israelites was the court of the priests, separated by a wall about a foot and a half in height. Within that court was the altar of burnt-offering, and the laver standing in front of it. Here the priests performed the daily service of the temple.

The temple, properly so called, stood within this court. It surpassed in splendour all the other buildings of the holy city; perhaps in magnificence it was unequalled in the world. It fronted the east. From the mount of Olives there was a beautiful and commanding view of the whole sacred edifice. It was there that our Saviour sat, when the disciples directed his attention to the goodly stones with which the temple was built, Mark xiii. 1. The entrance into the temple itself was from the court of the priests, by an ascent of twelve steps. The porch in front of the temple was a hundred and fifty feet high, and as many broad. The open space in this porch through which the temple was entered, was one hundred and fifteen feet high, and thirty-seven broad, without doors of any sort. The appearance of this, built, as it was, with white marble, and decorated with plates of silver, was exceedingly splendid. Josephus says, that in the rising of the sun it reflected so strong and dazzling an effulgence, that the eye of the spectator was obliged to turn away.

The temple itself was divided into two parts: the first called the sanctuary, or holy place, was sixty feet in length, sixty feet

in height, and thirty feet in width. In this was the golden candlestick, the table of shew-bread, and the altar of incense. The holy of holies, or the most holy place, was thirty feet each way. In the first temple, this contained the ark of the covenant, the tables of the law, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim. Into this place no person entered but the high-priest, and he but once in the year. These two apartments were separated only by a veil, very costly and curiously wrought. It was this veil which was rent from the top to the bottom when the Saviour died, Matt. xxvii. 51.

'And cast out them that bought and sold in the temple.' The place where this was done was the outer court, or the court of the Gentiles. This was esteemed the least sacred part of the temple. The things which they bought and sold were, at first, those pertaining to the sacrifices. It is not improbable, however, that the traffic afterwards extended to all kinds of merchandise. 'The tables of the money-changers.' The money in current use was Roman coin. But the Jewish law required that every man should pay a yearly tribute to the service of the sanctuary of half a shekel, Ex. xxx. 11—16. This was a Jewish coin; and it must be paid in that coin. It became, therefore, a matter of convenience to have a place where the Roman coin might be exchanged for the Jewish half shekel. This was the professed business of these men. They would demand a small sum for the exchange; and among so many thousands as came up to the great feasts, it would be a very profitable employment. 'The seats of them that sold doves.' Doves were required to be offered in sacrifice, Lev. xiv. 22. Luke ii. 24. Hence it became a business to keep them to sell to those who were required to offer them.

Mark adds, xi. 16, that Christ would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the temple. That is, probably, any of the vessels or implements connected with the traffic in oil, incense, wine, &c., that were kept for sale in the temple.

13 And said unto them, It is written, My house shall be called the house of prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

This is written in Isa. lvi. 7. The first part of this verse only is quoted from Isaiah. The rest 'but ye have made it a den of thieves,' was added by Jesus, denoting their abuse of the temple. In their dens thieves devise and practise iniquity. These buyers and sellers imitated them. They made the temple a place of gain; they cheated and defrauded; robbed the poor by selling what they had at an enormous price.

The following reasons may be given why this company of buyers and sellers obeyed Christ: 1. They were overawed by his authority; struck with the consciousness that he had a right to command. 2. Their own consciences reproved them; they knew they



were guilty, and dared make no resistance. 3. It had always been the belief of the Jews that a prophet had a right to change, regulate, and order the various affairs relating to external worship.

Mark and Luke add, that in consequence of this, the scribes and chief priests attempted to put him to death, Mark xi. 18, 19. Luke xix. 47, 48. This they did from envy, Matt. xxvii. 18. He drew off the people from them, and they envied and hated him.

14 And the blind and the lame came to him in the temple; and he healed them. 15 And when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that he did, and the children crying in the temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, 16 And said unto him, Hearest thou what these say? And Jesus saith unto them, Yea, have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings thou hast perfected praise?

The chief men of the nation were envious of his popularity. They could not prevent it; but being determined to find fault, they took occasion to do so from the shouts of the children. Our Lord confounded them by appealing to a text of their own scriptures. This text is found in Ps. viii. 2. This quotation is not made directly from the Hebrew, but from the Greek translation. The point of the quotation was to prove that children might offer praise to God, which is expressed in both the Hebrew and the Greek.

17 ¶ And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and he lodged there.

'Bethany.' See note, Matt. ver. 1.

18 Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. 19 And when he saw a fig-tree in the way, he came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only, and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the fig-tree withered away.

This tree was standing in the public road. It was, therefore, common property, and any one might lawfully take its fruit. Mark says, xi. 13, 'Seeing a fig-tree afar off, having leaves, he came,' &c. That is, not far off from the road; but seeing it at a considerable distance, having leaves appearing healthy and luxuriant, he presumed that there would be fruit on it. 'And found nothing thereon, but leaves only.' Mark, xi. 13, gives as a reason for this, that the time of figs was not yet. That is, the time of gathering the figs was not yet, or had not passed. This took place on the week of the passover, or in the beginning of April.

The summer in Palestine begins in March, and it is no uncommon thing that figs should be eatable in April.

Mark, xi. 12, 13, says that this took place on the morning of the day on which he purified the temple. Matthew would lead us to suppose that it was on the day following. Matthew records briefly what Mark records more fully. Matthew states the fact that the fig-tree was barren and withered away, without regarding minutely the order, or the circumstances in which the event took place. Such circumstantial variations show that the writers did not conspire to deceive the world. 'And said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee,' &c. Mark calls this cursing the tree, ch. xi. 21. All the curse that was pronounced, was in the words, that no fruit should grow on it. The Jews used the word curse, not as implying always wrath and anger, but to devote to death, or to any kind of destruction, Heb. vi. 8. 'And presently the fig-tree withered away.' That is, before another day. See Mark. It is probable that they were passing directly onward, and did not stop then to consider it. Mark states that they made the discovery on the morning after it was cursed, xi. 20.

20 And when the disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the fig-tree withered away!

'And when the disciples saw it.' That is, on the morning following, Mark xi. 20. 'They marvelled;' or wondered; 'and said,' &c. Peter said this, Mark xi. 21. Matthew means only to say that this was said to him: Mark tells us that it was Peter said it.

21 Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily, I say unto you, If ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the fig-tree, but also, if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

Jesus took occasion from this to establish their faith in God, Mark xi. 22. He told them that any difficulty could be removed by faith. To remove a mountain, denotes the power of overcoming any difficulty. The phrase was so used by the Jews.

22 And all things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive.

He adds an encouragement for them to pray, assuring them that they should have all things which they asked. This promise was evidently a special one, given to them in regard to working miracles.

23 ¶ And when he was come into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came unto him as he was teaching, and said, By what authority

doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?

See also Mark xi. 27—33, Luke xx. 1—8. 'When he was come into the temple.' That is, probably, into the inner court: the court of the Israelites. They took this opportunity when he was not surrounded by the multitude. 'By what authority,' &c. There was a show of propriety in this question. He was making great changes in the affairs of the temple, and they claimed to know why this was done, contrary to their permission. He was not a priest; he had no civil or ecclesiastical authority, as a Jew. 'These things.' The things which he had just done, in turning over the seats of those that were engaged in traffic, ver. 12.

24 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell me, I in like wise will tell you by what authority I do these things.

25 The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?

He took the wise in their own craftiness. Whatever answer they gave, he knew they would convict themselves. And so they saw, when they looked at the question. They reasoned correctly. If they said, from heaven, he would directly ask why they did not believe him. They professed to hear all the prophets. If of men, their reputation was gone, for all the people believed that John was a prophet. 'The baptism of John.' The word baptism here probably includes all his work. This was his principal employment; and hence he was called the Baptist, or the Baptizer. But our Saviour's question refers to his whole ministry. The ministry of John: his baptism, preaching, prophecies: was it from God, or not? If it was, then the inference was clear that Jesus was the Messiah; and then they might easily know by what authority he did these things. 'From heaven.' By divine authority, or by the command of God. 'From men.' By human authority.

26 But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet.

'We fear the people.' They feared that the people would stone them. (Luke.) Such an unpopular sentiment as to profess that all John did was imposture, would have probably ended in tumult, perhaps in their death.

27 And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And he said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

'We cannot tell.' This was a direct falsehood. The reason why they would not acknowledge that John was a prophet, was that if they did, they saw he could easily show them by what authority he did these things; that is, as Messiah. John predicted him, pointed him out, baptized him, came as his forerunner, to fulfil the prophecies. If they acknowledged one, they must acknowledge the other.

28 ¶ But what think ye? A *certain* man had two sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my vineyard. 29 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. 30 And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, Sir: and went not. 31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto him, The first. Jesus saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. 32 For John came unto you in the way of righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

'Two sons.' By those two sons our Lord intends to represent the conduct of the Jews, and that of the publicans and sinners. 'In my vineyard.' See note on ver. 33. To work in the vineyard here represents the work which God requires man to do. 'I will not.' This had been the language of the publicans and wicked men. They refused at first, and did not profess to be willing to go. 'Repented.' Changed his mind. Afterwards, at the preaching of John and Christ, they repented and obeyed. 'The second said, I go, Sir: and went not.' This represented the conduct of the scribes and pharisees—professing to obey God; observing the external rights of religion—but opposed really to the kingdom of God, and about to put his Son to death. 'Whether of them twain,' &c. Which of the two. 'They say unto him, The first.' This answer was correct. But it is strange that they did not perceive that it condemned themselves. 'Go into the kingdom of God.' Become christians, or more readily follow the Saviour. See note, Matt. iii. 2. 'Before you.' Rather than you. They are more likely to do it than you. You are self-righteous, self-willed, and obstinate. 'John came in the way of righteousness.' That is, in the right way, or teaching the way to be righteous; to wit, by repentance. Publicans and harlots heard him, and became righteous, but they did not.

33 ¶ Hear another parable: There was a certain



householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country :

The parable of the vineyard. This is also recorded in Mark xii. 1—12. Luke xx. 9—19. 'Hear another parable.' See note, Matt. xiii. 3. 'A certain householder.' Note, Matt. xx. 1. 'Planted a vineyard.' A place for the cultivation of grapes. It is often used to represent the church of God, as a place cultivated and valuable. Judea was favourable to vines, and the figure is frequently used, therefore, in the sacred writers. See Matt. xx. 1. It is used here to represent the Jewish people. 'Hedged it round about.' This means, he inclosed it, either with a fence of wood or stone, or more probably with thorns, thick set and growing, a common way of inclosing fields in Judea. 'And digged a wine-press in it.' Mark says, digged a place for the wine-fat. This should have been so rendered in Matthew. The original word does not mean the press in which the grapes were trodden, but the vat or large cistern into which the wine ran. The wine-press was made of two receptacles. The upper one, in Persia at present, is about eight feet square, and four feet high ; in this the grapes are thrown, and trodden by men, and the juice runs into the large receptacle, or cistern below. See Isa lxiii. 3. 'And built a tower.' See also Isa. v. 2. For the keepers who defended the vineyard from thieves and animals, especially from foxes or jackals, Cant. i. 6 ; ii. 15. 'And let it out,' &c. This was not an uncommon thing. Vineyards were often planted to be let out for profit. 'Into a far country.' This means, in the original, only that he departed from them. It does not mean that he went out of the land. Luke adds, 'for a long time.' That is, as appears, till the time of the fruit ; perhaps for a year. These circumstances denote in general that God had taken proper care of his vineyard ; that is, his people ; but beyond that we cannot affirm that they mean any particular thing, for he has not told us that they do.

34 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it.

The time of gathering the fruit. The vineyard was let out probably for a part of the fruit, and the owner sent to receive the part that was his. 'Sent his servants.' These doubtless represent the prophets sent to the Jewish people.

35 And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

‘And killed another.’ See Luke xiii. 34. Heb. xi. 37. 1 Sam. xxii. 18. 1 Kings xix. 10. ‘And stoned another.’ This was among the Jews a common way of punishment, Deut. xiii. 10; xvii. 7. Josh. vii. 25. Especially was this the case in times of popular tumult, and of sudden indignation among the people, Acts vii. 58; xiv. 19. John viii. 59; x. 31. This does not imply of necessity that those who were stoned died; they might be only severely wounded. Mark says, ‘at him they cast stones, and wounded him in the head, and sent him away,’ &c.

There is a little variation in the circumstances, as mentioned by Matthew, and by Mark and Luke; but the substance is the same. Mark and Luke are more particular, and state the order in which the servants were sent one after another. They all denote the ill conduct of the people to the prophets. All these things had been done to them. See Jer. xlv. 4—6. 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21; xxxvi. 16. Neh. ix. 26.

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. 37 But last of all, he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son.

Mark adds, that this was an only son, greatly beloved. This beautifully and most tenderly exhibits the love of God, in sending his only Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to die for men. To ‘reverence,’ denotes honour, esteem, deference—that feeling which we have in the presence of one greatly our superior—to give such a person, in our feelings and deportment, the honour which is due to his rank and character. God is often represented in the bible as giving his Son, his only begotten and well-beloved Son, for a lost world, John iii. 16, 17. 1 John iv. 9, 14. Rom. viii. 3, 32. Gal. iv. 4.

38 But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance.

An ‘heir’ is one who succeeds to an estate, commonly a son; an ‘inheritance’ is what an heir receives.

39 And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the vineyard, and slew *him*.

This refers to the conduct of the Jews in putting the Saviour to death. So they understood it, ver. 45. This was done, by giving him into the hands of the Romans, and seeking his crucifixion, Matt. xxvii. 20—25. Acts ii. 23; vii. 51, 52. ‘And cast him out of the vineyard.’ The vineyard in this parable may represent Jerusalem. Jesus was crucified out of Jerusalem, on the north-west side; on mount Calvary, Luke xxiii. 33.

40 When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen ?

The design of asking them this question was, that they might condemn themselves, and admit the justice of the punishment that was soon coming upon them.

41 They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons.

They answered according as they knew men would act, and would act justly in doing it. He would take away their privileges, and confer them on others. This was the answer which Jesus wished. He wished to show them the justice of taking away their national privileges, and punishing them in the destruction of their city and nation. They did not yet see the bearing of what they had admitted.

42 Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

This passage is found in Ps. cxviii. 22, 23. It was first applicable to David; but no less to Jesus. 'The stone.' The figure is taken from building a house. The principal stone for size and beauty, is that commonly laid as the corner-stone. 'Which the builders rejected.' This represents the Lord Jesus, proposed to the Jews as the foundation, or corner-stone, on which to build the church: rejected by them—the builders—on account of his want of comeliness, or beauty; that is, of what they esteemed to be comely, or desirable, Isa. liii. 2, 3. 'The same is become,' &c. Though rejected by them, yet God chose him, and made him the foundation of the church. Christ is often compared to a stone, a corner-stone, a tried, that is, a sure, firm foundation: all in allusion to the custom of building, Acts iv. 11. Rom. ix. 33. Eph. ii. 20. 1 Pet. ii. 7. 'Marvellous in our eyes.' That the Son of God should stoop so low, be despised and rejected, and put to death; that God should raise him up, and build a church on this foundation, embracing the Gentile as well as the Jew, and spreading through all the world, is a subject of wonder and of praise to all the redeemed.

43 Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

Jesus applies the parable to them—the Jews. They had been *the children of the kingdom*; or under the reign of God; having

his law and acknowledging him as King. They had been his chosen and peculiar people. But he says that now this privilege should be taken away, and they cease to be the peculiar people of God; and the blessing should be given to a nation who would bring forth the fruits thereof, or be righteous; that is, to the Gentiles, Acts xxviii. 28.

44 And whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder.

'Whosoever shall fall,' &c. There is a reference here, doubtless, to Isa. viii. 14, 15. Having made an allusion to himself as a stone, or a rock, ver. 42, he proceeds to state the consequences of coming in contact with it. He that falls upon it, shall be broken; he that runs against it shall be injured, or broken in his limbs, or body. He that is offended with my being the foundation, or opposes me, shall, by the act, injure himself; making himself miserable by so doing. 'On whom this stone falls, it will grind him to powder.' There is an allusion here, doubtless, to the custom of stoning, as a punishment among the Jews. A scaffold was erected twice the height of the man to be stoned. Standing on its edge, he was violently struck off by one of the witnesses; if he died by the blow and the fall, nothing further was done; if not, a heavy stone was thrown down on him, which at once killed him. So the Saviour speaks of the falling of the stone on his enemies. They who oppose him, reject him, and continue impenitent, shall be crushed by him in the day of judgment, and perish for ever.

45 And when the chief priests and pharisees had heard his parables, they perceived that he spake of them. 46 But when they sought to lay hands on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet.

They at last perceived that he spoke of them, and would have gratified their malice at once, but they feared the people.

#### CHAPTER XXII.

1 AND Jesus answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, 2 The kingdom of heaven is like unto a certain king, which made a marriage for his son,

'Spake by parables.' See note, Matt. xiii. 3. This parable refers undoubtedly to the rejection of the Jews, and to the calling of the Gentiles. The gospel, with all its privileges, was offered to the Jewish people; but through their wickedness and pride they rejected it, and all its blessings were offered to the Gentiles,



and accepted. This is the general truth. Many circumstances are thrown in which need not be particularly explained. 'A marriage for his son.' Rather a marriage-feast, or a feast on the occasion of the marriage of his son. The king here doubtless represents God, providing for the salvation of the world.

3 And sent forth his servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding : and they would not come.

'And sent forth his servants.' These represent the messengers God has sent to invite men to his kingdom. 'To call them that were bidden.' That is, to give notice to those who had before been invited, that the feast was ready. It appears that there were two invitations, one considerably before the time, that they might have opportunity to prepare for it, and the other to give notice of the precise time when they were expected. 'The wedding.' The marriage-feast. The same word in the original as in verse 2. 'They would not come.' They might have come if they chose, but they would not. So all the difficulty that sinners ever labour under in regard to salvation is in the will. It is a fixed determination not to come, and be saved.

4 Again, he sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared my dinner : my oxen and *my* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready : come unto the marriage.

'Other servants.' Who might press it on their attention. So God repeats his message to sinners, when they reject it. 'My dinner.' As marriages were, among eastern nations, in the evening, it refers here to a meal taken at that time. 'Fatlings.' This word denotes any fat animals. As oxen are also mentioned, however, it refers here probably to lambs, or roes, or calves, 2 Sam. vi. 13. 1 Chron. xv. 26.

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise :

'But they made light of *it*.' Treated it with contempt, as a thing of no consequence : an exact representation of the conduct of sinners in regard to the gospel. 'One to his farm,' &c. Thus men are engaged so much in their worldly employments, that they pretend they have no time to attend to religion. The world is in their view of more value than God. 'Merchandise.' Traffic ; trading.

6 And the remnant took his servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

The others showed positive malignity. Some sinners seem to be well satisfied by merely neglecting religion ; while others proceed against it with open violence and bitter malice. 'En-

treated them spitefully.' Reviled and abused them. This was done because they hated and despised the king. So sinners often abuse and calumniate ministers of religion, because they hate God.

7 But when the king heard *thereof*, he was wroth : and he sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city.

This doubtless refers to the Jews. They were murderers, having slain the prophets ; and God was about to send forth the armies of the Romans to burn up their city. Note, Matt. xxiv.

8 Then saith he to his servants, The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.  
9 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage.

'The highways.' It means the square, or principal street, into which a number of smaller streets enter ; a place where many persons would be seen, and persons of all descriptions. By this is represented the offering of the gospel to the Gentiles.

10 So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good : and the wedding was furnished with guests.

'Bad and good.' All descriptions of people. None are good by nature ; if they were, they would not need the gospel. But some are worse than others ; and all need the gospel.

11 ¶ And when the king came in to see the guests, he saw there a man which had not on a wedding-garment :

Anciently kings and princes were accustomed to make presents of changes of raiment to their friends and favourites, to refuse to receive which was an expression of the highest contempt, Gen. xlv. 22. 2 Kings x. 22. Esther vi. 8 ; viii. 15. The garments worn on festival occasions, were chiefly long white robes ; and it was the custom of the person who made the feast to prepare such robes to be worn by the guests. This renders the conduct of this man more inexcusable. He came in his common ordinary dress, though one had been provided for him, if he had applied for it. His not doing it, was expressive of the highest disrespect for the king. This represents the conduct of the hypocrite in the church. A garment of salvation might be his, but he chooses the filthy rags of his own righteousness, and thus offers the highest contempt for that provided in the gospel.

12 And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou

in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless.

'Friend.' Rather, companion. The word does not imply friendship. 'He was speechless.' He had no excuse. So it will be with all hypocrites.

13 Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'Cast him into outer darkness.' See note, Matt. viii. 12. This, without doubt, refers to the future punishment of the hypocrite. Matt. xxiii. 23—33; xxiv. 51.

14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

Our Saviour often uses this expression. It was probably proverbial. The Jews had been called, but few of them had been chosen to life. The great mass of the nation were wicked, and showed by their lives that they were not chosen to salvation. The Gentiles also were called, invited to be saved, Isa. xlv. 22. Nation after nation has been called, or invited to be saved; but few have yet showed that they were real christians, the elect of God.

15 ¶ Then went the pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle him in *his* talk.

The pharisees and Herodians endeavoured to entangle Jesus. This narrative is also found in Mark xii. 13—17. Luke xx. 20—26. See note Matt. iii. 7. To 'entangle,' means to ensnare, as birds are by a net, artfully to lay a plan for enticing, to beguile by proposing a question, and by leading, if possible, to an incautious answer. This was the kind proposed here to Jesus. 'In his talk.' The word 'his' is supplied here by the translators. It means in conversation, or by talking with him; not alluding to any thing that he had before said.

16 And they sent out unto him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that thou art true, and teachest the way of God in truth, neither carest thou for any *man*: for thou regardest not the person of men.

'The Herodians.' It is probable that they took their name from Herod the Great. The law of Moses was, that a stranger should not be set over the Jews as a king, Deut. xvii. 15. Herod, who had received the kingdom of Judea by appointment of the Romans, held that the law of Moses referred only to a voluntary choice of a king, and did not refer to a necessary submission,

where they had been overpowered by force. They supposed, therefore, that it was lawful in such cases to pay tribute to a foreign prince. This opinion was, however, extensively unpopular among the Jews. Hence the difficulty of the question. Whatever way he decided, they supposed he would be involved in difficulty. If he should say it was not lawful, the Herodians were ready to accuse him as being an enemy of Cæsar; if he said it was lawful, the pharisees were ready to accuse him to the people as being opposed to their rights. 'We know that thou art true.' A hypocritical compliment not believed by them, but artfully said, as compliments often are, to attempt to conceal their true design. 'Neither carest thou for any man.' That is, thou art an independent teacher, delivering thy sentiments without regard to the fear or favour of man. 'For thou regardest not the person of men.' Thou art not partial. Thou wilt decide according to truth, and not from any bias towards either party. To regard the person, or to respect the person, is in the bible uniformly used to denote partiality; or being influenced in a decision, not by truth, but by previous attachment to a person, or one of the parties—by friendship, or bias, or prejudice, Lev. xix. 15. Deut. xvi. 19. 2 Sam. xiv. 14. Acts x. 34. James ii. 1, 3, 9. 1 Pet. i. 17. Jude 16.

17 Tell us therefore, what thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?

Tribute was the tax paid to the Roman government. 'Cæsar.' The Roman emperor. The name 'Cæsar,' after the time of Julius Cæsar, became common to all the emperors, as Pharaoh was the common name of all the kings of Egypt. The Cæsar who reigned at that time was Tiberius.

18 But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, *ye* hypocrites?

'Tempt ye me.' Try me, or endeavour to lead me into difficulty by an insidious question. 'Hypocrites.' Dissemblers. Professing to be candid inquirers, when your only object is to lead me into difficulty. Note, Matt. vi. 2.

19 Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny.

The money in which the tribute was paid. This was a Roman coin. Their having that coin about them, and using it, was proof that they themselves held it lawful to pay the tribute; and their pretensions, therefore, were mere hypocrisy. 'A penny.' See note on ch. xix. 2.

20 And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription?

'This image.' The likeness of the reigning prince was struck



on the coins. 'Superscription,' The name and titles of the emperor.

21 They say unto him, Cæsar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

Cæsar's image and name on the coin proved that it was his. It was proper therefore to give it back to him when he called for it. But while this was done, he took occasion to charge them also to give to God what he claimed; that they should give him their hearts, lives, property, and influence, as his due.

22 When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left him, and went their way.

'They marvelled.' They had been foiled in their attempt. Though he had apparently decided in favour of the Herodians, yet his answer confounded both parties, and wholly prevented the use which they intended to make of it.

23 ¶ The same day came to him the sadducees, which say that there is no resurrection, and asked him,

For the conversation of Jesus with the sadducees respecting the resurrection, see also Mark xii. 18—27. Luke xx. 27—38. For an account of the sadducees see note, Matt. iii. 7. 'No resurrection.' The resurrection literally means the raising up the body to life after it is dead, John xi. 24; v. 29. 1 Cor. xv. 12. But the sadducees not only denied this, but also a future state at all; and the separate existence of the soul after death, as well as the existence of angels and spirits, Acts xxiii. 8. These doctrines have commonly stood or fallen together, but the answer of our Saviour more distinctly refers to the separate existence of the soul, and to a future state of rewards and punishments, than to the resurrection of the body.

24 Saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

'Moses said,' &c. See Deut. xxv. 5, 6. This law was given by Moses in order to keep the families and tribes of the Israelites distinct, and to perpetuate them. 'Raise up seed unto his brother.' That is, the children shall be reckoned in the genealogy of the deceased brother; or, to all civil purposes, shall be considered as his.

25 Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and,

having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: 26 Likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. 27 And last of all the woman died also. 28 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

'There were with us seven brethren.' It is probable that they stated a case as difficult as possible; and though no such case might have occurred, yet it was supposable, and in their view it presented a great difficulty.

29 Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.

The 'scriptures,' here mean the books of the Old Testament. By appealing to them, he showed that the doctrine of the future state was there, and that the sadducees should have believed it as it was, and not have added the absurd doctrine to it that men must live there as they do here. The way in which the enemies of the truth attempt to make a doctrine of the bible ridiculous, is by adding to it, and then calling it absurd. He produced a passage from the books of Moses, ver. 32, because they had also appealed to his writings, ver. 24. Other places of the Old Testament asserted it more clearly, Dan. xii. 2. Isa. xxvi. 19; but he wished to meet them on their own ground. 'Nor the power of God.' They probably denied, as many have done since, that God could gather the scattered dust of the dead, and remould it into a body, opposing reason to revelation, and supposing that infinite power could not reorganize a body that it had first organized, and raise a body from its own dust which it had at first raised from nothing.

30 For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven.

'Neither marry,' &c. This was a full answer to the objections of the sadducees. 'But are as the angels of God.' That is, in the manner of their intercourse; and the mode of their existence. Luke adds, that they shall be equal to the angels. That is, they shall be elevated above the circumstances of mortality, and live in a manner, and in a kind of intercourse equal to the angels. He also adds, neither do they die any more, but are the children of God, being the children of the resurrection, or being accounted worthy to be raised up to life, and therefore sons of God raised up to him.

31 But as touching the resurrection of the dead, *have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by God, saying,* 32 I am the God of Abraham, and the

God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. 33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at his doctrine.

'As touching,' &c. That is, in proof that the dead are raised. The passage which he quotes is recorded in Ex. iii. 6, 15. This was at the burning bush. (Mark and Luke.) Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had been long dead when Moses spoke this: Abraham 329 years, Isaac 224, and Jacob 198. Yet God spake then as being still their God. They must, therefore, be still somewhere living; for God is not the God of the dead. Luke adds, all live unto him. That is, all the righteous dead: all of whom he can be properly called their God, live unto his glory, are blessed by him, and live for his honour. This passage proves that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, had an existence then, or that their souls were alive. This the sadducees denied, Acts xxiii. 8. And this was the main point in dispute. If this was admitted—then it would easily follow that the bodies of the dead would be raised.

34 ¶ But when the pharisees had heard that he had put the sadducees to silence, they were gathered together.

Jesus converses with a pharisee respecting the law. See also Mark xii. 28—34. The pharisees would rejoice that the sadducees had been confounded, but they would not be the less desirous to involve Jesus in difficulty. They therefore endeavoured, probably, to find the most difficult question in dispute among themselves, and proposed it to him to perplex him.

35 Then one of them, *which was* a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying,

'A lawyer.' One learned or skilled in the law of Moses. Mark calls him one of the scribes. This means the same thing. He had heard Jesus reasoning with the sadducees, and perceived that he answered them well; and he thought Jesus to be better qualified to hold a debate with him. (Mark.) 'Tempting him.' Trying him. Proposing a question to try his knowledge of the law.

36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law?

'Which is the great commandment?' That is, the greatest commandment. The Jews then divided the law into greater and smaller commandments. Which was of the greatest importance they had not determined. Some held that it was the law respecting sacrifice; others, that respecting circumcision; others, that

pertaining to washings and purifying, &c. 'The law.' The word 'law' means, commonly, in the bible, as it does here, the law given by Moses.

37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

Mark says, that he introduced this by referring to the doctrine of the unity of God—"Hear, O Israel! the Lord thy God is one Lord"—taken from Deut. vi. 4. This was said, probably, because all true obedience depends on the correct knowledge of God. 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God,' &c. Thou shalt love him supremely, more than all other beings and things, and with all the ardour possible. To love him with all the heart is to fix the affections supremely on him, more strongly than on anything else, and to be willing to give up all that we hold dear at his command. 'With all thy soul.' Or, with all thy life. This means, to be willing to give up the life to him, and to devote it all to his service. 'With all thy mind.' To submit the intellect to his will. To love his law and gospel more than we do the decisions of our minds. 'With all thy strength.' (Mark.) With all the faculties of soul and body. To labour and toil for his glory, and to make that the great object of all our efforts.

38 This is the first and great commandment.

This commandment is found in Deut. vi. 5. It is the first and greatest of all; first, in importance; greatest in dignity, in excellence, in extent and duration. It is the fountain of all others. All beings are to be loved according to their excellence. As God is the most excellent and glorious of all beings, he is to be loved supremely.

39 And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

'The second is like unto it.' Lev. xix. 18. Resembles it in importance, dignity, purity, and usefulness. For its meaning, see note, Matt. xix. 19. See also Rom. xiii. 9. Mark adds, there is no greater commandment than these. They are the fountain of all.

40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

That is, these comprehend the substance of what Moses in the law, and what the prophets have spoken. Love to God and man comprehends the whole of religion; and to produce this has been the design of Moses, the prophets, the Saviour, and the apostles.

Mark, xii. 32—34, adds that the scribe said, 'Well Master, thou hast said the truth;' and that he assented to what Jesus had said, and admitted that to love God and man in this manner



was more than all burnt-offerings and sacrifices ; that is, was of more value or importance. Jesus, in reply, told him that he was ' not far from the kingdom of heaven ;' that is, by his reply he had shown that he was almost disposed to receive the doctrines of the gospel.

41 ¶ While the pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them,

See Mark xii. 35—37. Luke xx. 41—44. Jesus proceeds in his turn to propose to them a question for their solution. This was done, to show them how ignorant they were of their prophecies, to humble them in view of their ignorance, to bring to their attention the true doctrine respecting the Messiah.

42 Saying, What think ye of Christ ? whose son is he ? They say unto him, *The son of David.*

' What think ye of Christ ?' What are your views respecting the Messiah, or the Christ, especially respecting his genealogy ? He did not ask them their views respecting him in general, but only respecting his ancestry. The article should have been retained in the translation—the Christ, or the Messiah. ' Whose son is he ?' Whose descendant. Note, Matt. i. 1. ' The son of David.' The descendant of David, according to the promise.

43 He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call him Lord ? saying,

' How then,' &c. How is this doctrine, that he is descended from David, consistent with what David says, when he calls him Lord ? That is recorded in Psa. cx. 1. A lord or master is a superior. David calls him his superior, his lord, his master, his lawgiver ; expresses his willingness to obey him. If the Messiah was to be merely a descendant of David, as other men descend from parents—if he did not exist when David wrote—with what propriety could he, then, call him his lord ? ' In spirit.' By the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. As a prophet. Acts ii. 30 ; i. 16. 2 Sam. xxiii. 2.

44 The Lord said unto my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool ?

' The Lord said,' &c. This is the language of David. ' Jehovah said 'to my lord—the Messiah—Sit thou,' &c. This was a prediction respecting the exaltation of Christ. To be raised to the right hand of a king was significant of favour, trust, and power. Note, Matt. xx. 21. This was done respecting Christ. Mark xvi. 19. Acts vii. 55. Rom. viii. 34. Eph. i. 20. Heb. i. 3 ; viii. 1 ; x. 12. ' Thine enemies thy footstool.' He shall put all enemies under his feet—all his spiritual foes—all that rise up against him, Psa. ii. 9, 12. Heb. x. 13. 1 Cor. xv. 25.

45 If David then call him Lord, how is he his son ?

'If David,' &c. If he was then David's lord—if he had an existence at that time—how could he be descended from him ? They could not answer him. Nor is there any way of answering the question but by the truth, that the Messiah was divine as well as human. That he had an existence at the time of David, and was his Lord and Master, his God and King—and that as man he was descended from him—thus being the root as well as the offspring of David, Rev. xxii. 16.

46 And no man was able to answer him a word ; neither durst any *man*, from that day forth, ask him any more *questions*.

'Neither durst any man,' &c. Mark xii. 34. Luke xx. 40. He had confounded all their sects : the Herodians, ver. 15—22 ; the sadducees, 23—33 ; and last, the pharisees, 34—40.

#### CHAPTER XXIII.

1 THEN spake Jesus to the multitude, and to his disciples, 2 Saying, The scribes and the pharisees sit in Moses' seat :

'Scribes and pharisees.' Note, Matt. iii. 7. 'Moses' seat.' Moses was a legislator of the Jews. By him the law was given ; and the office of explaining that law devolved on the scribes and pharisees. In the synagogues they sat while expounding the law, and rose when they read it. By sitting in the seat of Moses, we are to understand, authority to teach the law.

3 All, therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do ; but do not ye after their works : for they say, and do not.

'All, therefore, whatsoever,' &c. That is, all that they teach consistent with the law of Moses ; all the commands of Moses which they read to you and properly explain. See Matt. xv. 1—6. 'They say and do not.' The interpretation they give to the law is in the main correct, but their lives do not correspond with their teaching. It is not the duty of men to imitate their teachers, unless their lives are pure.

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders ; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

'They bind heavy burdens,' &c. This phrase is derived from the custom of loading animals. The load or burden is bound up,

and then laid on the beast. So the pharisees appoint weighty burdens, or precepts grievous and heavy, and insist that the people should obey them, though they lent no assistance. They were rigid in requiring that all should pay the taxes, give of their property, comply with every part of the law with the utmost rigour, yet indulged themselves, and bore as little of the expense and trouble as possible; so that where they could avoid it, they would not lend the least aid to the people in the toils and expense of their religious rites. 'With one of their fingers.' In the least degree.

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

'Their phylacteries.' These were small slips of parchment or vellum, on which were written certain portions of the Old Testament. They were bound either round the wrists or foreheads. They wore them, as they supposed, in obedience to the requirements of the law—understanding that literally which was evidently intended to be understood figuratively, Ex. xiii. 9. Deut. vi. 8. These phylacteries were commonly about an inch in width, and of various lengths, from a foot to a foot and a half. They were bound with fillets round the arm, or to the forehead, so as to be seen conspicuously. The pharisees enlarged them, or made them wider than other people, either that they might make the letters larger, or write more on them; to show, as they supposed, that they had peculiar reverence for the law. The passages commonly written on them were, Ex. xiii. 1—10, 11—16; Deut. vi. 6—9; xi. 13—21. 'Enlarge the borders of their garments.' This refers to the loose threads which were attached to the borders of the outer garment as a fringe. This fringe was commanded in order to distinguish them from other nations, and that they might remember to keep the commandments of God, Numbers xv. 38—40. Deut. xxii. 12. They made them broader than other people wore them, to show that they had peculiar respect for the law.

6 And love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues,

'The uppermost rooms at feasts.' It would be more correctly rendered the uppermost places or couches at feasts. To understand this it is necessary to remark that the custom among the Jews was not to eat sitting, as we do, but reclining on couches. The table was made by three tables, placed so as to form a square, with a clear space in the midst, and one end quite open. On the sides of them were placed cushions, capable of containing three or more persons. On these the guests reclined leaning on their *left side*, with their feet extended from the table, and so lying

that the head of one naturally reclined on the bosom of another, John xiii. 23. Luke xvi. 22, 23. As the feet were extended from the table, it was easy to approach the feet behind, and even unperceived. Thus in Luke vii. 37, 38, while Jesus reclined in this manner, a woman that had been a sinner came at his feet behind him, and washed them with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. She stood on the floor, on the outside of the couches. So our Saviour washed the feet of his disciples as they reclined on a couch in this manner, John xiii. 4—12. Whenever we read in the New Testament of sitting at meals, it always means reclining in this manner, and never sitting as we do. The chief seat or the uppermost one, was the middle couch at the upper end of the table. This the pharisees loved, as a post of honour or distinction. ‘Chief seats in the synagogues.’ The seats usually occupied by the elders of the synagogue, near the pulpit. Note, Matt. iv. 23.

7 And greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

‘Greetings in the markets.’ Marks of particular respect shown to them in public places. ‘Greetings.’ Salutations. See note, Luke x. 4. ‘To be called Rabbi, Rabbi.’ This word literally signifies great. It was a title given to eminent teachers of the law among the Jews; a title of honour and dignity, denoting their authority and ability to teach.

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* Christ; and all ye are brethren.

Jesus forbade his disciples to seek such titles of distinction. The reason he gave was that he was himself their Master and Teacher. They were on a level; they were to be equal in authority; they were brethren; and they should neither covet nor receive a title which implied either an elevation of one above another, or which appeared to infringe on the absolute right of the Saviour to be their only Teacher and Master.

9 And call no *man* your father upon the earth: for one is your Father which is in heaven.

‘And call no man your father,’ &c. The word ‘father’ also denotes authority, eminence, superiority, a right to command and a claim to particular respect. In this sense it is used here. In this sense it belongs eminently to God, and it is not right to give it to men. Christian brethren are equal. God only has supreme authority. He only has a right to give laws, to declare *doctrines*, to bind the conscience, to punish disobedience. Christ taught that the source of all life and truth was God; and men ought not to seek or receive a title which properly belongs to him.



10 Neither be ye called Masters : for one is your Master, *even* Christ.

'Masters,' leaders. Those who go before others ; who claim, therefore, the right to direct and control others. This was also a title conferred on Jewish teachers.

Neither of these commands forbids us to give proper titles of civil office to men, or to render them the honour belonging to their station, Matt. xxii. 21. Rom. xiii. 7. 1 Pet. ii. 17. They forbid the disciples of Jesus to seek or receive mere empty titles implying eminence, and authority to control the opinions and conduct of others, and claiming that others should acknowledge their superiority.

11 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. 12 And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased ; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

See note, Matt. xx. 26. 'He that shall humble himself,' &c. God will exalt or honour him that is humble, and seeks a lowly place among men. That is true religion, and God will reward it.

13 ¶ But wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men : for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

'Wo unto you.' You are guilty, and punishment will come upon you. He proceeds to state wherein they were guilty. This most eloquent, most appalling, and terrible of all discourses ever delivered to mortals, was pronounced in the temple, in the presence of multitudes. Never was there more faithful dealing, more terrible reproof, more profound knowledge of the workings of hypocrisy, or more skill in detecting the concealments of sin. This was the last of Christ's public discourses ; and it is a most solemn summary of all he ever had said, or had to say, of a wicked and hypocritical generation. 'Scribes and pharisees.' Note, Matt. iii. 7. 'Hypocrites.' Note, Matt. vi. 2. 'Ye shut up the kingdom of heaven.' Note, Matt. iii. 2. They shut it up by their doctrines. By teaching false doctrines respecting the Messiah, by binding the people to an observance of their traditions, by opposing Jesus, and attempting to convince the people that he was an impostor, they prevented many from becoming his followers. Luke says, xi. 52, they had taken away the key of knowledge ; that is, they had taken away the right interpretation of the ancient prophecies respecting the Messiah, and thus had done all they could to prevent the people from receiving Jesus as the Redeemer.

14 Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer : therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

'Devour widows' houses.' The word 'houses' is here used to denote property or possessions of any kind. 'Ye devour.' You take away, or get possession of, by improper arts and pretences. They induced widows and poor people to commit the management of their property to them, as guardians and executors, and took advantage of them, and defrauded them. They put on the appearance of great sanctity, and induced many weak women to give them much, under pretence of devoting it to religious purposes. 'Long prayers.' Their prayers are said to have been often three hours in length. One rule among them, says Lightfoot, was to meditate an hour, then pray an hour, and then meditate another hour—all of which was included in their long prayers, or devotions. 'Damnation.' The word here refers to future punishment. It does not always, however. It means, frequently, no more than condemnation, or the Divine disapprobation of a certain course of conduct ; see 1 Cor. xi. 29. Rom. xiv. 23. 'For a pretence.' For appearance or show ; in order that they might the better defraud poor people. They would not be condemned for making long prayers, but because they did it with an evil design.

15 Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of hell than yourselves.

'Ye compass sea and land.' Ye take every means—spare no pains to gain proselytes. 'Proselyte.' One that comes over from a foreign nation, religion, or sect to us. A convert. 'Twofold more the child of hell.' That is, twice as bad. To be a child of hell was a Hebrew phrase, signifying to be deserving of hell, to be awfully wicked. The Jewish writers themselves say that 'the proselytes were reproaches to Israel,' and 'hindered the coming of the Messiah' by their great wickedness. The pharisees gained them either to swell their numbers, or to make gain by extorting their money under various pretences ; and when they had accomplished that, they took no pains to instruct them or to restrain them, and they were consequently left to the full indulgence of their vices.

16 Wo unto you, ye blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the temple, it is nothing ; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple he is

a debtor! 17 *Ye* fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

‘Whosoever shall swear,’ &c. See note, Matt. v. 33—37. ‘The temple.’ Note, Matt. xxi. 12. ‘It is nothing.’ It amounts to nothing. It is not binding. ‘The gold of the temple.’ Either the golden vessels in the temple, the candlestick, &c. or the gold with which the doors and other parts of the temple were covered, or the gold in the treasury. ‘He is a debtor.’ He is bound to keep his oath. He is guilty if he violates it. To sanctify, is to make holy. The gold had no holiness but what it derived from the temple.

18 And whosoever shall swear by the altar, it is nothing; but whoso sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty. 19 *Ye* fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gift, or the altar that sanctifieth the gift? 20 Whoso therefore shall swear by the altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon.

The altar of burnt-offerings, in the court of the priests. Note, Matt. xxi. 12. It was made of brass, about thirty feet in length and breadth, and fifteen feet in height, 2 Chron. iv. 1. On this altar were offered all the oblations of the temple in which blood was shed. ‘The gift that is upon it.’ The gift or offering made to God, so called because it was devoted or given to him. The gift upon this altar was always beasts or birds. The altar, dedicated to God, gave all the value or holiness to the offering, and must therefore be the greatest, or of the most importance.

21 And whoso shall swear by the temple, sweareth by it, and by him that dwelleth therein.

‘Him that dwelleth therein.’ That is, God. The temple was his house, his dwelling. In the first, or Solomon’s temple, he dwelt between the cherubims, in the most holy place. He manifested himself there by a visible symbol, in the form of a cloud resting on the mercy-seat, 1 Kings viii. 10, 13. Psa. lxxx. 1.

22 And he that shall swear by heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by him that sitteth thereon.

‘The throne of God.’ Heaven is his throne, Matt. v. 34. It is so called as being the place where he sits in glory. Jesus says here, that all who swear at all, whose oath is binding, do in fact swear by God, or the oath is good for nothing. The essential thing in an oath is calling God to witness our sincerity. If a real oath is taken, therefore, God is appealed to. If not, it is foolish and wicked to swear by any thing else.

23 Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites ! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier *matters* of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith : these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

‘Ye pay tithe.’ A tenth part. The law required the Jews to devote a tenth part of all their property to the support of the Levites, Numb. xviii. 20—24. Another tenth part they paid for the service of the sanctuary, commonly in cattle or grain ; but where they lived far from the place of worship, they changed it to money, Deut. xiv. 22—26. Besides these, there was to be every third year, a tenth part given to the poor, to be eaten at their own dwellings, Deut. xiv. 28, 29. So that nearly one third of the property of the Jews was devoted to religious services by law. ‘Mint.’ A garden herb, in the original so called from its agreeable flavour. It was used to sprinkle the floors of their houses and synagogues, to produce a pleasant fragrance. ‘Anise.’ Known commonly among us as dill. It has an aromatic smell, and is used by confectioners and perfumers. ‘Cummin.’ A plant of the same genus, like fennel, and used for similar purposes. These were all herbs of little value. It was a question whether these should be tithed. The pharisees maintained, in their extraordinary strictness, that they ought. Our Saviour says that they were precise in doing small matters, which the law had not expressly commanded, while they omitted the greater things which it had commanded. ‘Judgment.’ Justice to others, as magistrates, neighbours, citizens. Giving to all their just dues. ‘Mercy.’ Compassion and kindness to the poor and miserable. ‘Faith.’ Piety towards God ; confidence in him. The word here means to give to God what is his due ; as mercy and justice mean to do to men, in all circumstances, what is right. ‘These ought ye to have done.’ Attention to even the smallest points of the law of God is proper, but it should not interfere with the higher and more important parts of that law.

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

‘Which strain at a gnat,’ &c. This is a proverb. It should have been, to strain *out* a gnat ; and so it is printed in some of the earlier versions. The Greek means, to strain out by a cloth or sieve. ‘A gnat.’ Not the winged insect, as with us ; but small animalculæ. The Jews were so delicate, that with a fine cloth they attempted to strain them out of wine. It is here used to denote a very small matter, as a camel is to denote a large *object*. *You Jews take very great pains to avoid offence in very small matters, superstitiously observing the smallest points of the*



law, while you are at no pains to avoid great sins—hypocrisy, deceit, oppression, and lust.

25 Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup, and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

‘The cup and the platter.’ The drinking cup, and the dish containing food. The pharisees were diligent in observing all the washings and oblations required by their traditions. ‘Full of extortion and excess.’ The meaning is, that though they took much pains to appear well, yet they obtained a living by extortion and wickedness. Their cups, neat as they appeared outwardly, were filled, not with the fruits of honest industry, but were extorted from the poor by wicked arts.

26 *Thou* blind pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

‘Cleanse first,’ &c. Let them be filled with the fruits of honest industry, and then the outside and the inside will be really clean. By this allusion to the cup and platter Christ taught them that it was necessary to cleanse the heart first, that the outward conduct might be really pure and holy.

27 Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men's* bones, and of all uncleanness. 28 Even so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

‘Like unto whited sepulchres.’ For the construction of sepulchres, see note, Matt. viii. 28. The law considered those persons unclean, who had touched any thing belonging to the dead, Numb. xix. 16. Sepulchres were therefore often whitewashed, that they might be distinctly seen. Thus ‘whited,’ they appeared beautiful. But within they contained the bones and corrupting bodies of the dead. So the pharisees. Their outward conduct appeared well. Their hearts were full of hypocrisy, envy, pride, lust, and malice—fitly represented by the corruption of a whited tomb.

29 Wo unto you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous,

‘Ye build the tombs of the prophets.’ That is, ye build *sepulchres or tombs* over the prophets that had been slain. This

they did professedly from veneration, and respect for their character. 'And garnish,' &c. That is, adorn or ornament. This was done by rebuilding them with more taste, decorating them and keeping them neat and clean.

**30** And say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.

'And say,' &c. This they professed to say by rebuilding their tombs. They also, probably, publicly expressed their disapprobation of the conduct of their fathers. All this, in building and ornamenting tombs, was a profession of extraordinary piety. Our Lord showed them that all was mere pretence.

**31** Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets.

'Ye be witnesses *unto yourselves*.' The emphasis, here, lies in the words 'unto yourselves.' In spite of all this pretence to piety—under cloak of all this profession—they knew in their consciences, were witnesses to themselves, that it was mere hypocrisy, and that they really approved the conduct of those who slew the prophets. 'Children of them,' &c. Not only descended from them, but possessing their spirit, and in similar circumstances would have done as they did.

**32** Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers.

This is a prediction of what they were about to do. You act out your true spirit, you will show what you were, and will evince to all that you had the spirit of your fathers. 'The measure.' The full amount, so as to make it complete. By your slaying me, fill up what is lacking of the iniquity of your fathers till the measure is full; and then shall come upon you all this blood, and you shall be destroyed, ver. 34, 35.

**33** *Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?*

'Ye serpents.' This name is given them on account of their pretending to be pious, and very much devoted to God, but being secretly evil. With all their pretensions, at the heart they were filled with evil designs, as the serpent was, Gen. iii. 1—5. 'Generation of vipers.' See note, Matt. xii. 34. 'Damnation of hell.' So great was their wickedness and hypocrisy, that if they persevered in this course, it was impossible to escape the damnation that should come on the guilty. This is the most stern language that Jesus ever used to wicked men. Christ knew that this was true of them. He had an authority which *none now have*. He knew the hearts of men. We know them *not*, He could declare certainly that those whom he addressed

would be lost. We have no such authority. He addressed persons, we address characters.

34 ¶ Wherefore, behold, I send unto you prophets, and wise men, and scribes : and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify, and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city :

Prophets, wise men, and scribes, were the names by which the teachers of religion were known among the Jews, and he, therefore, used the same terms when speaking of the messengers which he would send. 'I send,' has the force of the future, I will send. 'Some of them ye shall kill.' As in the case of Stephen, Acts vii. 59, and James, Acts xii. 1, 2. 'Crucify.' Punish with death on the cross. The Jews had not the power of crucifying, but they gave them into the hands of the Romans to do it. 'Shall scourge.' See note, Matt. x. 17. This was done, 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25. 'Persecute,' &c. Note, Matt. v. 10. This was fulfilled in the case of nearly all the apostles.

35 That upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel, unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the temple and the altar. 36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

'That upon you may come,' &c. That is, the nation is guilty. Your fathers were guilty. You have shown yourselves to be like them. You are about, by slaying the Messiah and his messengers, to fill up the iniquity of the land. These national crimes deserve national judgments : and the proper judgments for all these crimes are about to come upon you in the destruction of your temple and city. 'All the righteous blood.' That is, all the judgments due for shedding that blood. God did not hold them guilty for what their fathers did ; but temporal judgments descend on children in consequence of the wickedness of parents ; as in the case of drunken and profligate parents. So of the Jews. The appropriate effects of their fathers' crimes were coming on the nation, and they would suffer. 'Upon the earth.' Upon the land of Judea. The word is often used with this limitation. See Matt. iv. 8. 'Righteous Abel.' Slain by Cain, his brother Gen. iv. 8. 'Zacharias, son of Barachias.' It is not certainly known who this was. Some have thought it was the Zechariah whose death is recorded in 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21. He is there called the son of Jehoiada ; but it is known that it was common among the Jews to have two names, as Matthew is called Levi. 'Whom ye slew.' Whom you, Jews, slew. Whom your nation killed. 'Between the temple and the altar.' Between the

temple, properly so called, the sanctuary, and the altar of burnt-offering in the court of the priests. See the description of the temple, Matt. xxi. 12. 'Upon this generation.' The destruction of Jerusalem took place about forty years after this was spoken. See the next chapter.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

'O Jerusalem,' &c. See note, Luke xix. 41, 42. 'Would I have gathered.' Would have protected and saved. 'Thy children.' Thy people.

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

'Your house.' The temple. The house of worship of the Jews. The chief ornament of Jerusalem. Desolate. About to be desolate, or destroyed. To be forsaken as a place of worship, and delivered into the hands of the Romans, and destroyed. See notes on chapter xxiv.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

'Ye shall not see me,' &c. The day of your mercy is gone by. I have offered you protection and salvation, and you have rejected it. You will not see me as a merciful Saviour, offering you redemption any more, till you have borne those heavy judgments. They must come upon you, and be borne, until you would be glad to hail a deliverer, and say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. Blessed be he that comes as the Messiah, to bring deliverance. This has not been yet accomplished, but the days will come when the Jews, long cast out and rejected, will hail Jesus as the Messiah, and receive him whom their fathers slew, as the merciful Saviour, Rom. xi. 25—32.

#### CHAPTER XXIV.

1 AND Jesus went out, and departed from the temple: and his disciples came to *him* for to show him the buildings of the temple.

Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple, as he takes his final leave of it, and teaches what were the signs of his coming. These predictions are also recorded in Mark xiii. Luke xxi. 5—38.

'And Jesus went out.' He was going to the mount of Olives,



ver. 3. 'The buildings of the temple.' The temple itself, with the surrounding courts, porches, and other edifices. See note, Matt. xxi. 12. Mark says, that they particularly pointed out the stones of the temple, as well as the buildings. 'In that temple,' says Josephus, the Jewish historian, 'were several stones which were forty-five cubits in length, five in height, and six in breadth,' seventy feet long, ten wide, and eight high. Those stones, of such enormous size, were principally used in building the high wall on the east side, from the base to the top of the mountain.

2 And Jesus said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

'There shall not be left here one stone upon another.' At the time this was spoken, no event seemed more improbable than this. Yet in the short space of forty years all this was exactly accomplished. Jerusalem was taken by the Roman armies, under the command of Titus, A. D. 73. The account of the siege and destruction of the city is left us by Josephus, an historian of undoubted veracity and singular fidelity. He was a Jewish priest. In the wars of which he gives an account, he fell into the hands of the Romans, and remained with them during the siege and destruction of the city. Being a Jew, he would of course say nothing designed to confirm the prophecies of Jesus Christ. Yet his whole history appears almost like a running commentary on these predictions respecting the destruction of the temple.

After the city was taken, Josephus says, that Titus 'gave orders that they should now demolish the whole city and temple, except three towers, which he reserved standing. But for the rest of the wall, it was laid so completely even with the ground by those who dug it up from the foundation, that there was nothing left, to make those believe who came hither, that it had ever been inhabited.' Titus was desirous of preserving the temple; and frequently sent Josephus to the Jews to induce them to surrender, and save the temple and city. But the prediction of the Saviour must be fulfilled. The Jews themselves first set fire to the porticoes of the temple. One of the Roman soldiers, without any command, threw a burning firebrand through a window, and soon the temple was in flames. Titus gave orders to extinguish the fire; but amidst the tumult, none of his orders were obeyed. The soldiers pressed to the temple, and neither fear, nor entreaties, nor stripes, could restrain them or control them; and thus, says Josephus, the temple was burnt against the will of Cæsar.

3 ¶ And as he sat upon the mount of Olives, the disciples came unto him privately, saying, Tell us,

when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the world?

'He sat upon the mount of Olives.' Notē, Matt. xxi. 12. From that mount there was a magnificent view of the whole city. 'The disciples came unto him privately.' Not all of them, but Peter, James, John, and Andrew, Mark xiii. 3. The prediction that the temple would be destroyed, ver 2, had been made in the presence of all the apostles. A part now came privately to know more particularly when this would be. 'When shall these things be?' &c. There are three questions here: 1. When those things should take place. 2. What should be the signs of his coming. 3. What should be the signs that the end of the world was near. To these questions he replies in this and the following chapters. This he does, intermingling the descriptions of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of the end of the world. The principle on which this combined description of two events was spoken, appears to be, that they could be described in the same words, and, therefore, the accounts are intermingled. A similar use of language is found in some parts of Isaiah, where the same language will describe the return from the Babylonish captivity, and deliverance by the Messiah. 'Sign of thy coming.' Evidence that thou art coming. By what token shall we know that thou art coming.

4 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. 5 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

They were to be constantly on their guard, as many would arise to deceive the people. 'Many shall come in my name.' In the name of the Messiah, or claiming to be the Messiah. 'I am Christ,' I am the Messiah. Many would lay claims to being the Messiah, and, as he was universally expected, many would easily be led to believe in them. There is abundant evidence that this was fully accomplished. Josephus informs us that there were many who, pretending to Divine inspiration, deceived the people, leading out numbers of them into the desert. 'The land,' says he, 'was overrun with magicians, seducers, and impostors, who drew the people after them, in multitudes, into solitudes and deserts, to see the signs and miracles which they promised to show by the power of God.' The names of twenty-four false Messiahs are recorded as having appeared between the time of the emperor Adrian and the year 1682.

6 And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet.

'And ye shall hear of wars,' &c. It is recorded in the histories

of Rome, that the most violent agitations prevailed in the Roman empire previous to the destruction of Jerusalem. Four emperors, Nero, Galba, Otho, and Vitellus, suffered violent deaths in the short space of eighteen months. Parties were formed; and bloody and violent wars were the consequence of attachment to the particular emperors. This is the more remarkable, as at the time that the prophecy was made, the empire was in a state of peace. 'Rumours of wars.' Wars declared, or threatened, but not carried into execution. Josephus says, that Bardanes, and after him Volageses, declared war against the Jews, but it was not carried into execution. He also says that Vitellus, governor of Syria, declared war against Aretas, king of Arabia, and wished to lead his army through Palestine, but the death of Tiberius prevented the war. 'The end is not yet.' The end of the Jewish economy; the destruction of Jerusalem will not immediately follow.

7 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. 8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

'And there shall be famines.' There was a famine foretold by Agabus, Acts xi. 28, which is mentioned as having occurred, by Tacitus, Suetonius, and Eusebius; and which was so severe in Jerusalem, Josephus says, that many people perished for want of food. Four times in the reign of Claudius (A. D. 41—54), famines prevailed at Rome, Palestine, and Greece. 'Pestilences.' Raging, epidemic diseases. The plague, sweeping off multitudes of people at once. A pestilence is recorded as raging in Babylonia, A. D. 40; in Italy, A. D. 66. Both of these took place before the destruction of Jerusalem. 'Earthquakes.' Tacitus mentions one in the reign of Claudius, at Rome, and says, that in the reign of Nero, the cities of Laodicea, Hierapolis, and Colosse were overthrown; and the celebrated Pompeii was overwhelmed, and almost destroyed by an earthquake. 'The beginning of sorrows.' Far heavier calamities are yet to come before the end.

9 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake.

'To be afflicted.' By persecution, imprisonment, scourging, &c. 'They shall deliver you up to councils.' (Mark.) To the great council, or sanhedrim, for this is the word in the original. Note, Matt. v. 22. This was fulfilled when Peter and John were brought before the council, Acts iv. 5—7. Mark further adds, xiii. 9, that they should be delivered to synagogues, and to prisons, to be beaten, and should be brought before rulers and kings, for his name's sake. All this was remarkably fulfilled. Peter and John were imprisoned, Acts iv. 3; Paul and Silas also, Acts xvi.

24. They were also beaten, xvi. 23. Paul was brought before Gallio, Acts xviii. 12, before Felix, xxiv. 24, and before Agrippa, xxv. 23. 'And shall kill you.' That is, shall kill some of you. Stephen was stoned, Acts vii. 59; James was killed by Herod, Acts xii. 2. And in addition to all that the sacred writers have told us, the persecution under Nero took place before the destruction of Jerusalem, in which Peter and Paul were put to death, with many others. Most of the apostles, it is believed, died by persecution.

When they should be delivered up, Jesus told them not to premeditate what they should say, for he would give them a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries could not gainsay or resist, Luke xxi. 14, 15. The fulfilment of this is recorded in the case of Stephen, Acts vi. 10, and of Paul, who made Felix tremble, Acts xxiv. 25. 'Ye shall be hated of all nations.' It was judged to be a crime to be a christian. Multitudes for this, and for nothing else, were put to death. 'For my name's sake.' On account of attachment to me; or because you bear my name as christians.

10 And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

'Many shall be offended.' See note, Matt. v. 29. Many shall stumble, fall, apostatize, from a profession of religion. Many who professed to love me, shall then show that they had no real attachment to me. See 1 John ii. 19. 'Shall betray one another.' Those who thus apostatize from professed attachment to me, shall betray others who really love me. This they would do to secure their own safety, by revealing the names, habitations, or places of concealment of others. 'Shall hate one another.' Not that real christians would do this, but those who had professed to be such, shall then show that they were not, and shall hate one another. Luke adds, that they should be betrayed by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolks, and friends. They would break through the most tender ties to surrender christians to punishment. This, in the persecutions of christians, has been often done; and nothing shows more fully, the deep and deadly hatred of the human heart to the gospel.

11 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many.

Josephus says, the tyrannical zealots who ruled the city, suborned many false prophets to declare that aid would be given to the people from heaven. This was done to prevent them from attempting to desert, and to inspire confidence in God.

12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

*The effect of all this would be, that the ardour of feeling of*



many christians would be lessened. The word 'wax' means, to become. It is an old Saxon word, not used now in this sense, except in the bible. The fear of death, and of treason, and the deluding influence of false teachers, would lessen the zeal of many timid and weak professors; perhaps also of many feeble christians.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

He that bears afflictions, persecutions, &c. faithfully; that constantly adheres to his religion, and does not shrink till death, shall be saved, or shall enter heaven. So Luke, xxi. 18, says, there should not a hair of the head perish; that is, they should be saved. A hair of the head, or the smallest part or portion, is a proverbial expression, denoting the certainty and completeness of their salvation. Luke, xxi. 19, further adds, 'In your patience possess ye your souls.' That is, keep your souls patient; keep proper possession of patience as your own. It is a part of religion to teach it; and in these trying times, let it not depart from you.

14 And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

The evidence that this was done is to be chiefly derived from the New Testament, and there it is clear. Thus Paul declares, that it was preached to every creature under heaven, Col. i. 6, 23; that the faith of the Romans was spoken of throughout the whole world, Rom. i. 8; that he preached in Arabia, Gal. i. 17, and at Jerusalem, and round about unto Illyricum, Rom. xv. 19. We know also, that he travelled through Asia Minor, Greece, and Crete; that he was in Italy, and probably in Spain and Gaul, Rom. xv. 24—28. At the same time, the other apostles were not idle; and there is full proof that within thirty years after this prophecy was spoken, churches were established in all these regions. 'For a witness unto all nations.' Hitherto the blessings of revelation had been confined to the Jews. They were the peculiar people of God. His messages had been sent to them only. When, therefore, God sent the gospel to all other people, it was a proof, or a witness unto them, that the peculiar Jewish economy was at an end. 'Then shall the end come.' The end of the Jewish economy. The destruction of the temple and city.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth, let him understand:)

'The abomination of desolation.' This is a Hebrew expression, meaning an abominable or hateful destroyer. The Gentiles were all held in abomination by the Jews Acts x. 28. The abo-

mination of desolation, means the Roman army; and is so explained by Luke, xxi. 20. 'Spoken of by Daniel the prophet,' Dan. ix. 26, 27; xi. 31; xii. 11. 'Standing in the holy place.' Mark says, standing where it ought not, meaning the same thing. All Jerusalem was esteemed holy, Matt. iv. 5. The meaning of this is, when you see the Roman armies standing in the holy city, or encamped around the temple, or the Roman ensigns or standards in the temple. Josephus further relates, that when the city was taken, the Romans brought their idols into the temple, and placed them over the eastern gate, and sacrificed to them there. 'Whoso readeth,' &c. This seems to be a remark made by the evangelist, to direct the attention of the reader particularly to the meaning of the prophecy by Daniel; but Doddridge thinks it the observation of Christ.

16 Then let them which be in Judea flee into the mountains:

Then christians may know that the end is come, and should seek a place of safety. Destruction would not only visit the city, but would extend to the surrounding part of Judea. 'The mountains.' The mountains of Palestine abound in caves, a safe retreat for those pursued. In all ages these caves were the favourite places of robbers; and were also resorted to by those in danger, 1 Sam. xiii. 6; xxii. 1. 2 Sam. xxiii. 13. Josh. x. 16. In those mountains they would be safe.

17 Let him which is on the house-top not come down to take any thing out of his house: 18 Neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes.

The roofs of the houses in eastern countries were made flat, so that they were convenient places for walking and retirement, and most commonly the stairs were so placed that persons could descend from the house-tops to the streets, without going into the house. See note, Matt. ix. 1—8. The meaning here is, that he who should be on the house-top when this calamity came upon the city, should flee without delay; he should not even take time to secure any article of apparel from his house. 'Clothes' here means the outer garment, commonly laid aside when men worked or ran. See note, Matt. v. 40. These directions were followed. It is said that the christians, warned by these predictions, fled from the city to Pella, and other places beyond Jordan; so that there is not evidence that a single christian perished in Jerusalem.

19 And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days! 20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter neither on the sabbath day:

The destruction was certainly coming. It could not be prevented. Yet it was right to pray for a mitigation of the circumstances; that it might be as mild as possible. 'In the winter.' On account of the cold, storms, &c. 'To be turned then from home, and compelled to take up an abode in caverns, would be a double calamity. 'Neither on the sabbath-day.' Journeys were prohibited by the law on the sabbath, Ex. xvi. 29. The law of Moses did not mention the distance to which persons might go on the sabbath; but most of the Jews maintained that it should not be more than two thousand cubits, or nearly a mile. This distance was allowed, in order that they might go to their places of worship. Jesus teaches them to pray that it might not be on the sabbath, because if they should not go further than a sabbath day's journey, they would not be beyond the reach of danger; and if they did, they would be exposed to the charge of violating the law. It should be added, that it was almost impracticable to travel in Judea on that day, as the gates of the cities were usually closed, Neh. xiii. 19—22.

21 For then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The word 'tribulation' means calamity, or suffering. Luke, xxi. 24, has specified in what this tribulation should consist. 'They shall fall by the edge of the sword, and shall be led away captive into all nations, and Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled.' That is, until the time allotted for the Gentiles to do it shall be fully accomplished.

The first thing mentioned by Luke is, that they should fall by the edge of the sword. That is, should be slain in war, as the sword was then principally used in war. This was most strikingly fulfilled. Josephus uses almost the very words of our Saviour. 'All the calamities,' says he, 'which had befallen any nation from the beginning of the world, were but small in comparison with those of the Jews.'

He has given the following account of one part of the massacre when the city was taken. 'And now rushing into the city, they slew whomsoever they found, without distinction, and burnt the houses and all the people who had fled into them. The whole city ran with blood, insomuch that many things which were burning were extinguished by the blood.' He adds, that in the siege of Jerusalem, not fewer than eleven hundred thousand perished. In the adjacent provinces no fewer than two hundred and fifty thousand are reckoned to have been slain; making in all, the almost incredible number of one million three hundred and fifty thousand, who were put to death. These were not indeed

all slain with the sword. Many were crucified. 'Many hundreds,' says he, 'were first whipped, then tormented with various kinds of tortures, and finally crucified; until at length the multitude became so great, that room was wanted for crosses, and crosses for the bodies.' So terribly was their imprecation fulfilled—'His blood be on us and on our children,' Matt. xxvii. 25. If it be asked how it was possible for so many people to be slain in a single city, it is answered, that the siege of Jerusalem commenced during the time of the passover, when all the males of the Jews were required to be there, and when it is estimated that more than three millions were usually assembled.

A horrible instance of the distress of Jerusalem is related by Josephus. A woman of distinguished rank, having been plundered by the soldiers, in hunger, rage, and despair, killed and roasted her babe, and had eaten one half of him before the deed was discovered. (Jewish Wars, b. vi. ch. 3, sec. 3, 4.) This cruel and dreadful act was also a fulfilment of prophecy, Deut. xxviii. 53, 56, 57.

Another thing added by Luke, ch. xxi. 24, was, that they should be led captive into all nations. Josephus informs us that the captives taken during the whole war amounted to ninety-seven thousand. The tall and handsome young men Titus reserved for his triumph; of the rest, many were distributed through the Roman provinces, to be destroyed by wild beasts in theatres, many were sent to the works in Egypt; many, especially those under seventeen years of age, were sold for slaves.

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect's sake those days shall be shortened.

If the calamities of the siege should be lengthened out. If famine and war should be suffered to rage. 'No flesh be saved.' None of the nation would be preserved alive. All the inhabitants of Judea would perish. The war, famine, and pestilence would entirely destroy them. 'But for the elect's sake.' The 'elect' here doubtless means christians. See 1 Pet. i. 2, Rom. i. 7, Eph. i. 4, 1 Thess. i. 4. It is probable that in Jerusalem and the adjacent parts of Judea, there were many who were true followers of Christ. On their account; to preserve them alive, and to make them the instruments of spreading the gospel, he said those days should not be lengthened out, and suffered to produce their destruction. It is related by Josephus, that Titus at first resolved to reduce the city by famine. He therefore built a wall around it, to keep any provisions from being carried in, and any of the people from going out. The Jews, however, drew up their army near the walls, engaged in battle, and the Romans pursued *them*, provoked by their attempts, and broke into the city; so that,



contrary to his original intention, he pressed the siege, and took the city by storm, thus shortening the time that would have been occupied in reducing it by famine. This was for the benefit of the elect. See Isa. x. 7. Gen 1. 20.

23 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* Christ, or there; believe *it* not.

'Lo here is Christ.' The Messiah. The Jews expected the Messiah to deliver them from Roman oppression. In the time of these great calamities they would anxiously look for him. Many would claim to be the Messiah. Many would follow them. 'Believe it not.' You have evidence that the Messiah has come, and you are not to be deceived by the plausible pretensions of others.

24 For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; inso-much that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

'False Christs.' Persons claiming to be the Messiah. 'False prophets.' Persons claiming to be the prophet spoken of by Moses, Deut. xviii. 15; or pretending to declare the way of deliverance from the Romans, and calling the people to follow them. See ver. 5. 'Shall show great signs and wonders.' That is, shall pretend to work miracles. Josephus represents the false Christs and prophets that appeared as magicians and sorcerers. He says, they led the people out into the deserts, and promised to work miracles to deliver them. 'If possible would deceive,' &c. So nearly would their pretended miracles resemble true miracles, as to render it difficult to detect the imposition; and as, if possible, to persuade even true christians that they were the Messiah. But that was not possible. They would be too firmly established in the belief that Jesus was the Messiah, to be wholly led away by others.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

Mark adds, ch. xiii. 23, Take ye heed. The reason why he told them before, was that they might be on their guard, and be prepared for these calamities.

26 Wherefore, if they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *he is* in the secret chambers; believe *it* not.

'Behold, he is in the desert.' The Jews had formed the expectation that the Messiah would appear suddenly, from some unexpected quarter. Accordingly, most of the impostors and pretended prophets led their people into the deserts. 'Go not forth.' Do not follow them. They will only deceive you. 'In secret

chambers.' Concealed in some house, or some retired part of the city.

27 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

Many would be looking for him in the desert; many in secret places. But it would be useless to be looking in that manner. It was useless to look to any particular part of the heavens, to know where the lightning would next flash. In a moment it would blaze in an unexpected part of the heavens, and shine at once to the other part. So rapidly, so unexpectedly, in so unlooked for a quarter would be his coming. See Luke x. 18. Zech. ix. 14. 'The coming of the Son of man.' It has been doubted whether this refers to the destruction of Jerusalem, or to the coming at the day of judgment. Those two events are the principal scenes in which our Lord said he would come, either in person or in judgment. They in many respects greatly resemble each other. They will bear, therefore, to be described in the same language. These words may have a primary reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, but also such an amplitude of meaning as to express his coming to judgment.

28 For wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

The words in this verse are proverbial. Vultures, which seem here referred to, easily ascertain where dead bodies are, and come to devour them. So with the Roman army. Jerusalem is like a dead and putrid corpse. Its life is gone, and it is ready to be devoured. The Roman armies will find it out. Jesus would come by means of them, as certainly, as suddenly, and as unexpectedly, as whole flocks of vultures, though unseen before, suddenly find their prey, and quickly gather in multitudes around it. So would the Roman armies discover Jerusalem, a putrid carcase, and hasten to destroy it.

29 ¶ Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken :

These images are often used by the sacred writers to denote any great calamities. Any great catastrophe, any overturning of kingdoms or cities, or dethroning of kings and princes, is represented by the darkening of the sun and moon, and by some terrible convulsion in the elements. Thus the destruction of Babylon is foretold in similar terms, Isa. xiii. 10; of Tyre, Isa. xxiv. 23. The slaughter in Bozrah and Idumea is predicted in the same language, Isa. xxxiv. 4. See also Isa. i. 3;

ix. 19, 20. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel iii. 15. To the description in Matthew, Luke has added, ch. xxi. 25; 'there should be distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming upon the earth.' All these are figures of great and terrible calamities. The roaring of the waves of the sea, denotes great tumult and affliction among the people. Perplexity means doubt, anxiety: not knowing what to do to escape. Men's hearts should fail them for fear, or by reason of fear. Their fears would be so great as to take away their courage and strength.

30 And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory.

'The sign of the Son of man,' At the destruction of Jerusalem, the sign, or evidence of his coming, was found in the fulfilment of these predictions. At the end of the world, the sign of his coming will be his personal approach with the glory of his Father and the holy angels, 1 Thess. iv. 16. Luke xxi. 27. Matt. xxvi. 64. Acts i. 11. 'All the tribes of the earth mourn.' All the wicked shall mourn at the prospect of their doom, Rev. i. 7. The cause of their wailing at the day of judgment shall be that they have rejected the Saviour, and deserve the condemnation that is coming upon them, John xix. 37. Zech. xii. 10. 'And they shall see the Son of man.' The Lord Jesus coming to judgment. 'In the clouds of heaven.' He ascended in a cloud, Acts i. 9. He shall return in like manner, Acts i. 11. 'The clouds of heaven' denote not the clouds in heaven, but the clouds that appear to shut heaven, or the sky, from our view. 'With power.' Power, manifest by consuming the material world, 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10, 12; by raising the dead, John v. 29, 30. 1 Cor. xv. 52; by changing those who may be alive when he shall come; that is, making their bodies like those who have died, and been raised up, 1 Thess. iv. 17. 1 Cor. xv. 52; by bringing the affairs of the world to a close, receiving the righteous to heaven, Matt. xxv. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 57; and by sending the wicked, however numerous or however strong, down to hell, Matt. xxv. 41, 46. John v. 29. 'Great glory.' The word, 'glory' here means the visible display of his honour and majesty, Matt. xxv. 31; xxvi. 64.

31 And he shall send his angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The word 'angels,' most commonly refers to the race of intelligences more exalted than man, who are employed often in the work of man's rescue from ruin, and his salvation, Heb. i. 14. They will gather together the elect, at the day of judgment. 'With a great sound of a trumpet.' The Jewish assemblies used to be called together by the sound of a trumpet, as ours are by bells, Lev. xxv. 9. Num. x. 2. Judges iii. 27. Our Saviour, speaking to Jews, described the assembling of the people at the last day, in a way which would be peculiarly clear and impressive to them. Similar language is often used, when speaking of the judgment, 1 Thess. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 52. A trump, or trumpet, was a wind instrument, made at first of the horns of oxen, and afterwards of rams' horns, cut off at the smaller extremity. In some instances it was made of brass in the form of a horn. The common trumpet was straight, made of brass or silver, a cubit in length, the larger extremity shaped so as to resemble a small bell. In times of peace, in assembling the people, this was sounded softly. In times of calamity, or war, or any great commotion, it was sounded loud. Perhaps this was referred to when our Saviour said, 'with a great sound of a trumpet.' 'They shall gather together his elect.' See on ver. 22. The word means christians: the chosen of God. It implies, that he will send his angels to gather his chosen, his elect, together from all places, Matt. xiii. 39, 41—43. This shall be done before the living shall be changed, 1 Cor. xv. 51, 52. 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17. 'From the four winds.' That is, from the four quarters of the globe: east, west, north, and south. The Jews expressed those quarters, by the winds blowing from them. See Ezek. xxxvii. 9. See also Isa. xliii. 5, 6. 'From one end of heaven,' &c. Mark says, xiii. 27, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of heaven. The expression denotes that they shall be gathered from all parts of the earth where they are scattered.

32 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When his branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: 33 So likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

'Now learn a parable.' See note, Matt. xiii. 3. The word here means, rather an illustration. Make a comparison, or judge of this as you do respecting a fig-tree. 'Fig-tree.' This was spoken on the mount of Olives, which produced not only olives, but figs. 'When his branch,' &c. When the juices return from the roots into the branches, and the buds swell and burst, as if tender, and too feeble to contain the pressing and expanding leaves. *When you see that, you judge that spring and summer are near.*



In the same manner, when you see what I have predicted, the signs around Jerusalem, then know that its destruction is at hand. 'Is near.' Luke says, xxi. 23, that your redemption draweth nigh, and, xxi. 31, the kingdom of God is nigh at hand. Your deliverance from the dangers that threaten the city approaches, and the kingdom of God will be set up in the earth.

34 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled.

'This generation.' This age; this race of men. A generation is about thirty or forty years. The destruction of Jerusalem took place about forty years after this was spoken. See note, Matt. xvi. 28. 'Till all these things,' &c. Till these things shall receive a full accomplishment. He does not mean to exclude here the reference to the judgment, but to say that the destruction of Jerusalem would be such as to make the words of the prediction appropriate, were there nothing beyond. But there was a fulness of signification that would meet also the events of the judgment, the meaning of which would not be filled up till the world was closed.

35 Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away.

You may sooner expect to see the heaven and earth pass away and return to nothing, than my words to fail.

36 ¶ But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no not the angels of heaven, but my Father only

Of the precise time of the fulfilment. The general signs of its coming have been given; as the budding of the fig-tree is a certain indication that summer is near. But the precise time is not indicated by these things. 'Knoweth no man, no, not the angels,' &c. Mark adds, xiii. 32, 'neither the Son.' He was man as well as God. As man, possessed of a human soul, he must have the properties of a human soul, and, among the rest, limited knowledge. Thus it is said, he increased in wisdom, Luke ii. 52. As man, therefore, he might be ignorant of a future event, which his Father had not chosen to communicate to him. A passage of the same kind is found in John iii. 13: 'he that came down from heaven, the Son of man, who is in heaven.' In heaven, in regard to his Divine nature; on earth in his human nature. So in his Divine nature he knew the day and hour of the destruction of Jerusalem; in his human nature he was ignorant of it.

37 But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

'Noe.' The Greek way of writing Noah. See Gen. vi. vii. viii. ix.

38 For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark.

It does not mean that these things were wrong, but only that such was their actual employment, and that they were regardless of what was coming upon them.

39 And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

That is, they knew not the exact time, until it came upon them. 'So,' says he, it shall be when the Son of man shall come. They shall not know the precise time until he comes, and then they shall be found so engaged in the ordinary business of life as to be unconcerned about the Divine threatenings.

40 Then shall two be in the field; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

'Then shall two be in the field,' &c. The calamity shall come suddenly. There shall be no escape for those whom it overtakes. 'One shall be taken.' The word 'taken' means to be taken away by death.

41 Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Grinding in the east was performed, as it is now, chiefly by hand. The mill-stones were about two feet in diameter, and half a foot in thickness. The lower one was fixed, and the upper one was turned by a handle, or crank. This was done by two persons, who sat opposite to each other. One took hold of the mill handle, and turned it half way round; the other then seized it, and completed the revolution. This was done by women; by servants of the lowest order; and was a very laborious employment. See Ex. xi. 5. Isa. xlvii. 2. Judges xvi. 21. The meaning of this verse is similar to the former. Of two persons sitting near to each other, one shall be taken, and the other left. The calamity would be sudden, and would come upon them before they were aware.

42 ¶ Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your Lord doth come.

'Watch.' Be looking for his coming. Watch the signs of his coming, and be ready.

43 But know this, that if the good man of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he

would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up.

If a man knew the hour, or about the hour when a robber would come, he would be ready for him. So you know not the exact hour, but you know it is near, when the Son of man will come. He will come suddenly, as a thief comes, without giving previous warning, 1 Thess. v. 2. 2 Pet. iii. 10. Rev. iii. 3; xvi. 15. 'Good man.' See Matt. xx. 11. 'Thief.' A robber. The original word means one who does it by house-breaking, or by highway violence, Luke x. 30. 'Broken up.' Broken into—either by the doors or windows. 'In what watch.' In which of the four quarters of the night. See note, Matt. xiv. 25.

44 Therefore be ye also ready : for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.

Luke, xxi. 36, says that he charged them to pray always, that they might be accounted worthy to escape those things—the judgments coming upon the wicked; and to stand before the Son of man—that is, to stand there approved by him, or admitted to his favour. He also charged them, Luke xxi. 34, to take heed and not to suffer their hearts to be overcharged with surfeiting, or too much eating, or drunkenness, or the cares of this life, lest the day should come upon them unawares; things improper if there were no judgment—peculiarly mad and wicked when the judgment is near.

45 Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

This passage (ver. 45—51) is in fact a parable, though it is not expressly so called. The design is to show that his disciples should act as if they were each moment expecting his return. 'Who, then, is a faithful and wise servant,' &c. By the conduct of a faithful and wise servant he intends to denote a faithful christian, a servant of God, or a teacher of religion. 'Whom his lord.' His master. Applied to christian teachers, in the spiritual meaning of the parable, it refers to Christ, who has appointed them as teachers, and who is their Lord and Master, John xiii. 13, 14. 'Over his household.' His family. Christian ministers are the servants of God appointed over the church, the family of Christ, 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. 1 Cor. iii. 5; iv. 1, 2; xii. 28. 'Meat in due season.' The word 'meat' here means all kinds of provisions requisite to support and nourish life. 'In due season.' At the proper time. As they need it, or in the accustomed times. This was the office of a steward. Applied to christian ministers, it means that they are to feed the flock of God, to minister to their wants, and to do it as they need it, John xxi. 15—17. Acts

46 Blessed *is* that servant whom his lord, when he cometh, shall find so doing. 47 Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all his goods.

'Shall make him ruler,' &c. This is a circumstance of the parable or story, designed to show the effect of faithfulness. Faithful servants of Christ shall be rewarded. This will be done by his approbation, and by the rewards of the heavenly world.

48 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My lord delayeth his coming;

'That evil servant.' If that servant, so appointed, having this office, should be evil or wicked. 'Say in his heart.' Secretly suppose. 'Delayeth his coming.' Will not return in a long time; or does not return as soon as was expected, and perhaps may not at all.

49 And shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken;

'Smite his fellow-servants,' &c. This is designed to represent the conduct of ministers who should be unfaithful, overbearing, and abusing their trust in the church.

50 The lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, 51 And shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'Shall cut him asunder.' This kind of punishment was anciently practised. Sometimes it was done by the sword, sometimes by saws. It was practised among the Chaldeans, Dan. ii. 5; iii. 29; among the Hebrews, 2 Sam. xii. 31. 1 Sam. xv. 33. Heb. xi. 37. It was also practised by the Egyptians and Romans. It here signifies, that the wicked servant shall be severely punished. 'Hypocrites.' See note, Matt. vi. 2. They are spoken of here as the worst of men. 'Weeping and gnashing of teeth.' See note, Matt. viii. 12, 13. The unfaithful and wicked minister of God, who lives without expectation or fear of judgment, shall suffer the severest punishment inflicted on sinners in the world of woe.

#### CHAPTER XXV.

1 THEN shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.

'Then shall the kingdom of heaven.' The phrase here refers to his coming in the day of judgment. 'Shall be likened.' Or



shall resemble. The meaning is, it shall be, when the Son of man returns to judgment, as it was in the case of ten virgins in a marriage ceremony. The coming of Christ to receive his people to himself is often represented under the similitude of a marriage—the church being represented as his spouse or bride. The marriage relation fitly represents the union of believers to Christ. See Matt. ix. 15. John iii. 29. Rev. xix. 7; xxi. 9. Eph. v. 25—32. ‘Ten virgins.’ These virgins, doubtless, represent the church—a name given to it because it is pure and holy. See 2 Cor. xi. 2. ‘Which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom.’ The lamps used on such occasions were rather torches or flambeaux. They were made by winding rags around pieces of iron or earthenware, sometimes hollowed so as to contain oil, and fastened to handles of wood. These torches were dipped in oil, and gave a strong light. Marriage ceremonies in the east were conducted with great pomp and solemnity. The ceremony of marriage was performed commonly in the open air, on the banks of a stream. After the ceremony, succeeded a feast of seven days if the bride was a virgin, or three days if she was a widow. This feast was celebrated in her father’s house. At the end of that time the bridegroom conducted the bride, with great pomp and splendour, to his own home. This was done in the evening or at night, Jer. vii. 34; xxv. 10; xxxiii. 11. Many persons attended them; and besides those who went with them from the house of the bride, there was another company that came out from the house of the bridegroom to meet them and welcome them. These were probably female friends and relatives of the bridegroom, who went out to welcome him and his new companion to their home. These are the virgins mentioned in this parable. Not knowing precisely the time when the procession would come, they probably went out early, and waited by the way till they should see indications of its approach.

2 And five of them were wise, and five *were* foolish,  
3 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took  
no oil with them: 4 But the wise took oil in their  
vessels with their lamps.

‘And five of them were wise.’ The words *wise* and *foolish*, here, refer to their conduct in regard to the oil. The one part was wise in taking oil, the other foolish in neglecting it. The conduct of the wise refers to those who are prepared for the coming of Christ; prepared by possessing real piety, and not merely profession. The conduct of those without oil expresses the conduct of such as profess to love him, but are destitute of true grace, and are unprepared to meet him. In this parable the scope is to teach us to watch or be ready, ver. 13. It is not to teach us the number of those who shall be ready, and those who shall not. *There is no authority for saying that our Lord meant to teach*

that just half of professing christians would be hypocrites. 'Oil in their vessels.' The five foolish virgins probably expected that the bridegroom would come immediately. They therefore provided for no delay, and no uncertainty. The wise virgins knew that the time of his coming was uncertain, and they therefore furnished themselves with oil. This was carried in vessels; so that it could be poured on the torch or flambeaux when it was necessary. 'Vessels.' Cups, cans, or any thing to hold oil.

5 While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

'The bridegroom tarried.' He delayed longer than they expected. 'All slumbered and slept.' Waiting till near midnight, they fell into repose. This circumstance is not to be pressed to prove that all christians will be asleep, or cold and careless, when the Lord Jesus will come. Many may be so; but many also will be looking for his coming. It is designed simply to show more clearly the duty of being ready, ver. 13.

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh: go ye out to meet him.

'At midnight.' Later than was the usual custom, and hence they had fallen asleep. 'A cry made.' Of those who were coming with the bridegroom.

7 Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

'Trimmed their lamps.' Burning till midnight, the oil was exhausted. They gave a dim and obscure light. This strikingly represents the conduct of most men at the approach of death. They then begin to make ready. They are alarmed, anxious, trembling, and asking the aid of others; and often when it is for ever too late.

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out. 9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*; lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves. 10 And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut.

'Went in with him to the marriage.' The marriage feast. The marriage ceremony took place before the bride left her father's house, but a feast was given at the house of her husband, and which was also called the marriage, or a part of the marriage solemnities. This part of the parable doubtless represents the

entrance of those who are ready, or prepared, into the kingdom of God, when the Son of man shall come. They will be ready who repent of their sins; who believe on the Lord Jesus; who live a holy life; and who wait for his coming. See Mark xvi. 16. John v. 24. Acts iii. 19. 2 Peter iii. 11, 12. 1 Tim. vi. 17—19. 2 Tim. iv. 6—8. 'The door was shut.' No more could be admitted to the marriage feast. So when the truly righteous shall all be received into heaven, it will be closed against all others. There will be no opportunity for preparation afterwards. Eccl. xi. 3; ix. 10. Matt. xxv. 46.

11 Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

'Open to us.' This is not to be understood as implying that any will come after the righteous shall be admitted into the kingdom, and claim admission then. It is a part of the parable to illustrate the general truth inculcated, or to prepare the way for what is afterwards said, and keep up the narrative and make it consistent.

12 But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not,

'I know you not.' Applied to professing christians, having only a profession, but no real piety, it means, I know, or acknowledge you not as christians. I do not approve of you, or delight in you, or admit you as my friends. The word 'know' is often used in the sense of approving, loving, acknowledging as real friends and followers. See Matt. vii. 23. Psal. i. 6. 2 Tim. ii. 19. 1 Thess. v. 12.

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh.

'Watch, therefore,' &c. This is the scope or design of the whole parable. Like the virgins, many are professedly going to meet the bridegroom—the Lord Jesus Christ. Like the coming of the bridegroom, his coming will be sudden. Many, even professing christians, will be engaged in the business of the world; thoughtless about eternity; not expecting his approach, and not prepared. They will only profess to know him, but in works they will deny him. Many, when they shall see him coming, at death or the judgment, will begin, like the foolish virgins, to be active, and to prepare to die. But it will be too late. They that are ready will enter in, and heaven will be closed for ever against all others. The coming of the Saviour is certain. The precise time when he will come is not certain. They who are christians should be ever watchful; and they who are not should lose no time to be ready; for in such an hour as they think not the Son of man shall come.

14 ¶ For the kingdom of heaven is as a man traveling into a far country, *who* called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods.

'For the kingdom of heaven,' &c. The design of this parable is to teach that those who improve their talents or faculties in the cause of religion, who improve them to their own salvation, and in doing good to others, shall be proportionally rewarded. But those who neglect their talents, and neither secure their own salvation nor do good to others, will be punished. The kingdom of heaven is like such a man; that is, God deals with men in his government as such a man did. 'His own servants.' That is, such of them as he judged worthy such a trust. The going into a far country may represent the Lord Jesus going into heaven. He has given to all talents to improve, Eph. iv. 8—12. 'His goods.' His property, representing the offices, abilities, and opportunities for doing good, which he has given to his professed followers.

15 And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

'Five talents.' See Matt. xviii. 24. It here denotes the highest abilities given to men; perhaps the highest offices in the church, and the greatest opportunity of doing good. 'According to his several ability.' According to the ability of each one. According as he saw each one was adapted to improve it. God gives men stations which he judges them adapted to fill. So he makes distinctions among men in regard to abilities, and in the powers and opportunities of usefulness; requiring them only to occupy those stations, and discharge their duties in them, 1 Cor. iv. 7.

16 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents. 17 And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

The two who had received most employed their money in trade, and by honest industry doubled it before their master returned, representing the conduct of those who make a good improvement of their abilities, and employ them in doing good.

18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his lord's money.

'Digged in the earth,' &c. This represents the conduct of those who neglect the abilities that God has given, and fail to do *what* he has required. Their excuses are without foundation: *for, God does not require us to do as much as those who have*



greater abilities ; but this is not a reason why we should do nothing, 2 Cor. viii. 12. That situation is honourable, and may be useful, where God has placed us ; and though humble, yet in that we may do much good, 1 Cor. xii. 11—31. Men of slender abilities often do more good in the world than men of much greater talents. It is rather a warm heart than a strong head which is required to do good.

19 After a long time the lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them.

‘After a long time,’ &c. By this is denoted the return of Christ to call men to an account for the manner in which they have improved their talents. See Rom. xiv. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10. 1 Thess. iv. 16. Acts i. 11 ; xvii. 31. ‘Reckon with them.’ To inquire into their faithfulness, and to reward or punish them accordingly.

20 And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me five talents ; behold, I have gained besides them five talents more. 21 His lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant : thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy lord. 22 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, thou deliverdest unto me two talents : behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. 23 His lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant ; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

‘I have gained.’ Gained by trading, ver. 16. By honest industry. ‘Ruler over many things.’ I will promote thee to greater honours and more important trusts. ‘Joy of thy Lord.’ The joy of his lord may mean either the festivals and rejoicing at his return, or the rewards which his lord had prepared for his faithful servants. Those who rightly improve their talents shall, at the return of Christ, be promoted to great honours in heaven, and be partakers of the joys of their Lord in the world of glory. See ver. 34 ; also 1 John ii. 28.

24 Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew thee that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed :

The design of this part of the parable is to show that no one is

excused in indolence because he has few talents. God will require of him only according to his ability, 1 Cor. iv. 2. Luke xii. 48. 2 Cor. viii. 12. 'A hard man,' Of a sordid, griping disposition; taking advantage of the poor and oppressing them. 'Reaping,' &c. This is indicative of an avaricious and overbearing disposition. Compelling the poor to sow for him, and reaping all the benefit himself. 'Hast not strawed.' The word 'straw' means to scatter, as men scatter seed in sowing it.

25 And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* thou hast *that* is thine.

'I was afraid.' I feared lest, by some accident, thy talent would be lost if I put it out to trade, and that I should be severely punished by a hard master. 'That is thine.' There is what properly belongs to thee. There is the original talent that thou gavest me, and that is all which can be reasonably required. This expresses exactly the feelings of all sinners. God, in their view, is hard, cruel, unjust. All the excuses of sinners are excuses for indolence and sin, and to cheat themselves out of heaven. Sinners grudge every thing that God requires. And if they give, they do it with hard feelings, and deem it all that he can claim.

26 His lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed.

'Slothful.' Indolent, lazy; who had done nothing. God will judge men, not merely for doing wrong, but for not doing right. See ver. 45. That servant was wicked, because he had such an opinion of his master; he had shown that he was slothful, by not making a good use of the talent, ver. 27. 'Thou knewest,' &c. If you knew he was such a man, you ought to have acted accordingly, so as to have escaped punishment. This is not intended to admit that he was such a man, but to convict the slothful servant of guilt and folly in not having been prepared to give a good account to him.

27 Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at my coming I should have received mine own with usury.

The exchangers were persons who were in the habit of borrowing money, or receiving it on deposit at a low rate of interest, to be lent to others at higher interest. They commonly sat by tables in the temple, with money ready to exchange or lend. See Matt. xxii. 12. This money was left with the servant, not to exchange, nor to increase it by any such idle means, but by honest industry and merchandise; but since he was too indolent for that, he ought at least to have lent it to the exchangers, that

his master might have received some benefit from it. 'With usury.' With interest, increase, or gain.

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents. 29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

'For unto every one that hath shall be given.' See note, Matt. xiii. 12. This seems to be a proverbial expression. It means, whosoever rightly improves what is committed to him shall receive more, or shall be rewarded, but he that misimproves what is committed to him shall not be rewarded. The unfaithful and indolent shall be taken away from their privileges and punished.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

'And cast,' &c. See note, Matt. viii. 12. The spiritual meaning of the parable may be thus summed up: 1. The servants of God are not all endowed with equal gifts and talents. 2. They are bound to employ their talents in promoting his honour, and in a proper improvement of them. 3. By employing their talents in a proper manner, they improve and strengthen them. 4. They will be judged according to the improvements they have made. 5. They will be judged, not merely for doing wrong, but for neglecting to do right. What must they expect who abuse their talents, destroy by drunkenness and lust the noble faculties conferred on them, and squander the property that might be employed in advancing the interests of morals and religion!

31 ¶ When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory:

This is in answer to the question which the disciples proposed to him respecting the end of the world, ch. xxiv. 3. It contains the account of the last judgment, to take place at the end of the world, 1 Thess. iv. 14—17. 'In his glory.' In his own proper honour. With his glorified body, and as the head and king of the universe, Acts i. 11. Eph. i. 20—22. 1 Thess. iv. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 24, 25, 52. 'The throne of his glory.' This means, in the language of the Hebrews, his glorious or splendid throne. It expresses the idea that he will come as a king and judge, to assemble his subjects before him, and to appoint them their rewards.

32 And before him shall be gathered all nations.

and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats :

At his coming, the dead in Christ, that is, all true christians, shall be first raised up from their graves, 1 Thess. iv. 16. The living shall be changed, that is, shall be made like the glorified bodies of those that are raised from the dead, 1 Cor. xv. 52—54. 1 Thess. iv. 17. All the wicked shall rise and come forth to judgment, John v. 28, 29. Dan. xii. 2. Matt. xiii. 41, 42. Rev. xx. 13. 'And he shall separate,' &c. Shall determine respecting their character, and shall appoint them their doom accordingly.

33 And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.

By the 'sheep' are denoted, here, the righteous. The name is given to them because the sheep is an emblem of innocence and harmlessness. See John x. 7, 14—16, 27. Psa. c. 3; lxxiv. 1; xxxiii. 'On the right hand.' The right hand is the place of honour. See Eccl. x. 2. Eph. i. 20. Psa. cx. 1. Acts ii. 25, 33. 'The goats.' The wicked. See Ezek. xxxiv. 17. 'The left.' That is, the left hand. This was the place of dishonour, denoting condemnation. See Eccl. x. 2.

34 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world :

'The King.' That is, the Lord Jesus, the King of Zion, and of the universe, now acting as judge, Luke xix. 38. John xviii. 37. Rev. xvii. 14; xix. 16. 'Blessed of my Father.' Made happy, or raised to felicity by my Father. See note, Matt. v. 3. 'Inherit the kingdom.' Receive as heirs the kingdom, or be received there as the sons of God. Christians are often called heirs of God, Rom. viii. 17. Gal. iv. 6, 7. Heb. i. 14. 1 John iii. 2. 'Prepared for you,' &c. That is, designed or appointed for you. The phrase 'from the foundation of the world' is used to denote that this was appointed for them in the beginning; that God has no new plan; that the rewards which he will now confer on them he always intended to confer. Accordingly, the salvation of his people is uniformly represented as the result of the free gift of God, according to his own pleasure, bestowed on individuals, and by a plan which is eternal, Rom. viii. 29, 30. Eph. i. 4, 5, 11, 12. 2 Thess. ii. 13. 1 Peter i. 2. John vi. 37. All men are by nature equally undeserving. Bestowing favours on one does not do injustice to another, where neither deserves favour. Pardoning one criminal is not injuring another. Those who perish choose the paths which lead to death, and will not be saved by *the merits of Jesus*. No blame can be charged on God if he does *not save them* against their will, John v. 40. Mark xvi. 15, 16.



35 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat : I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink : I was a stranger, and ye took me in : 36 Naked, and ye clothed me : I was sick, and ye visited me : I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

'I was an hungered.' The union between Christ and his people is the most tender and endearing of all connexions. It is represented by the closest unions of which we have knowledge, John xv. 4—6. Eph. v. 23—32. 1 Cor. vi. 15. It is a union of feelings, interests, plans, destiny ; or, in other words, he and his people have similar feelings, love the same objects, share the same trials, and inherit the same blessedness, John xiv. 19. Rev. iii. 5, 21. Rom viii. 17. Hence he considers favours shown to his people as shown to himself, and will reward them accordingly, Matt. x. 40, 42. 1 John iii. 14, 17. James ii. 1—5. Mark ix. 41. 'Was a stranger.' The word 'stranger' means a foreigner, or traveller. To receive such to the rites of hospitality was, in eastern countries, where there were few or no public houses, a great virtue. See Gen. xviii. 1—8. Heb. xiii. 2. 'Took me in.' Into your house. Received me kindly. 'Naked.' Poorly clothed. Among the Jews they were called naked who were clad in poor raiment, or those who had only the tunic or inner garment, without any outer garment.

37 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed *thee* ? or thirsty, and gave *thee* drink ? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took *thee* in ? or naked, and clothed *thee* ? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee ?

This answer is indicative of humility—a deep sense of their being unworthy of such commendation. They will feel that their poor acts of kindness have come so far short of what they should have been, that they have no claim to praise or reward.

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done *it* unto me.

'One of the least of these.' One of the poorest, and most despised, and afflicted. 'My brethren.' Christians, whom he condescends to call brethren. See Heb. ii. 11. Matt. xii. 50.

41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.

'On the left hand.' The wicked. 'Ye cursed.' That is, ye who are devoted to destruction, whose characters deserve everlasting punishment, and who are about to enter into it. To curse, is the opposite of, to bless. It implies a negation of all the blessings of heaven, and a positive infliction of eternal sufferings, 'Everlasting fire.' Fire, here, is used to denote punishment. It expresses extreme suffering, as a death by burning is one of the most horrible that can be conceived. This image was well known to the Jews, Isa. lxvi. 24, and therefore expressed in a very strong manner the certainty, intensity, and eternity, of future torment. To us it is a subject of comparatively little consequence what will be the mode of punishment. The fact that the wicked will be eternally punished, cursed of God, should awe every spirit, and lead every man to secure his salvation. As, however, the body will be raised, it is not unreasonable to suppose that a mode of punishment will be adopted equivalent to the concentration of all earthly woes, all that makes man miserable here, poured upon the naked body and spirit of the wicked in hell, for ever and ever. 'Prepared for the devil.' The devil is the prince of evil spirits. This place of punishment was fitted for him when he rebelled against God, Jude 6. Rev. xii. 8, 9. 'His angels.' His messengers; his servants, or those angels that he drew off from heaven by his rebellion, and whom he has employed as his messengers to do evil. There is a remarkable difference between the manner in which the righteous shall be addressed, and the wicked. Christ will say to the one that the kingdom was prepared for them; to the other, that the fire was not prepared for them, but for another race of beings. They will inherit it because they have the spirit of the devil, the same character, and are therefore fitted to the same place; not because it was originally designed for them.

42 For I was an hungered, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: 43 I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. 44 Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? 45 Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to me.

'Inasmuch as ye did it not,' &c. By not doing good to the followers of Christ, they showed that they had no real love to him. Let it be observed, here, that the public ground of their condemnation is the neglect of duty, or because they did it not. *We are not to suppose that they will not also be condemned for*

their open and positive sins. See Rom. ii. 9. Eph. v. 5. Col. iii. 5, 6. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Rev. xxi. 8. Psal. ix. 17. But their neglect of charity, or of doing good to him and his people, may be the public reason of condemning them, because he wished to give pre-eminency to those virtues, to excite his followers to do them. Sin is a violation of the law. Besides, nothing better shows the true state of the heart than those duties, and the true character can be as well tried by them as by open crimes.

'One of the least of these.' These on my right hand. My brethren. Those who are saved.

46 And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.

'And these,' &c. These persons. 'Into everlasting punishment.' The original word, here translated 'punishment,' means torment, or suffering inflicted for crime. It does not mean simply a state or condition, but absolute, positive suffering. In regard to the meaning of the word 'everlasting' in this place, it is to be observed, that the literal meaning of the word expresses absolute eternity—always being, Matt. xviii. 8; xix. 16. Mark iii. 29. Rom. ii. 7. Heb. v. 9; that the obvious, plain interpretation of the word demands this signification; that the word used here is the same in the original as that used to express the eternal life of the righteous; if one can be proved to be limited in duration, the other can by the same arguments. The proof that the righteous will be happy for ever is precisely the same, and no other than that the wicked will be miserable for ever; and it is confirmed by many other passages of scripture, 2 Thess. i. 7—9. Luke xvi. 26. Rev. xiv. 11. Psal. ix. 17. Isa. xxxiii. 14. Mark xvi. 16. John iii. 36. 'Life eternal.' Man, by sin, has plunged himself into death, temporal, spiritual, eternal. Christ, by coming and dying, has abolished death, and brought life and immortality to light, 2 Tim. i. 10. 'Life' denotes, here, freedom from death, and positive holiness and happiness for ever.

## CHAPTER XXVI.

1 AND it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, he said unto his disciples, 2 Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the passover*, and the Son of man is betrayed to be crucified.

See also Mark xiv. 1—11. Luke xxii. 1—6. John xii. 1—7. 'After two days is the feast of the passover.' See note, Matt. xii. 1—8. The festival of the passover was celebrated to preserve among the Jews the memory of their liberation from Egyptian servitude, and of the safety of their first-born in that night when the first-born of the Egyptians perished, Ex. xii. The name '*passover*' was given to the feast because the Lord passed over

the houses of the Israelites without slaying their first-born, while the Egyptians were cut off, Ex. xii. 13. It was celebrated seven days. During all this period the people ate unleavened bread, and hence the festival was sometimes called the feast of unleavened bread, Ex. xii. 18. Lev. xxiii. 6. All the leaven or yeast in the family was previously removed with great care, as it is to the present time—a circumstance to which the apostle alludes, in 1 Cor. v. 7. The blood of the paschal lamb was in Egypt sprinkled on the door-posts of the houses; afterwards it was poured by the priests at the foot of the altar. The lamb thus slain was roasted whole, with two spits thrust through it—one lengthwise, and one transversely—crossing each other near the fore-legs; so that the animal was, in a manner, crucified. Not a bone of it might be broken—a circumstance strongly representing the sufferings of our Lord Jesus, the passover slain for us, John xix. 36. 1 Cor. v. 7. Thus roasted, the lamb was served up with wild and bitter herbs. At first it was observed with the loins girt about, with sandals on their feet, and with all the preparations for an immediate journey. This was significant of the haste with which they were about to depart from the land of bondage. The custom was afterwards retained, in celebrating the passover, by the especial command of God.

The order of the celebration of this feast was as follows: The ceremony commenced with drinking a cup of wine mingled with water, after having given thanks to God for it. This was the first cup. Then followed the washing of hands, with another short form of thanksgiving to God. The table was then supplied with the provisions, namely, the bitter herbs, the unleavened bread, the lamb, and a thick sauce composed of dates, figs, raisins, vinegar, &c. They then took a small quantity of herbs, with another thanksgiving, and ate it. After which, all the dishes were removed from the table, and a second cup of wine set before each guest as at first. The dishes were removed, it is said, to excite the curiosity of children, and to lead them to make inquiry into the cause of this observance. See Ex. xii. 26, 27. The leading person at the feast then rehearsed the history of the servitude of the Jews in Egypt, the manner of their deliverance, and the reason of instituting the passover. The dishes were then returned to the table. Holding up the bitter herbs and the unleavened bread, he stated the design—that the one represented the bitterness of the Egyptian bondage, and the other the suddenness of their deliverance. This done, he repeated the 113th and 114th psalms, offered a short prayer, and all the company drank the wine that had been standing some time before them. This was the second cup. The hands were then again washed, and the meal eaten, after which they washed the hands again, and drank another cup of wine, called the cup of blessing, because the leader was accustomed, in a particular manner, over that cup, to offer thanks to



God for his goodness. This is the cup which our Saviour is supposed to have taken when he instituted the Lord's supper, called by Paul the cup of blessing, 1 Cor. x. 16. There was still another cup which was drank when they were about to separate, called the Hallel, because in connection with it they were accustomed to repeat the lesser Hallel, or the 115th, 116th, 117th, 118th psalms. In accordance with this our Saviour and his disciples sang a hymn, as they were about to go to the mount of Olives, ver. 30. Our Saviour complied with these rites according to the custom of the Jews. While doing it, he signified that the typical reference of the passover was about to be accomplished; and he instituted in place of it the Lord's supper, and of course the obligation to keep the passover then ceased. 'The Son of man is betrayed.' Will be betrayed. 'To be crucified.' To be put to death on the cross. See note on Matt. xxvii. 35.

3 Then assembled together the chief priests and the scribes, and the elders of the people, unto the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas,

This was a meeting of the great council or sanhedrim. Note, Matt. v. 22. 'The palace.' The original word properly denotes the hall, or large area in the centre of the dwelling, called the court. See note, Matt. ix. 1—8. It may be understood, however, as referring to the palace itself. 'The high priest.' Holding the office that was first conferred on Aaron, Ex. xxviii. The office was at first hereditary, descending on the eldest son, Numb. iii. 10. Antiochus Epiphanes, about 200 years B.C. sold the office to the highest bidder. Herod changed the incumbents of the office at pleasure; a liberty which the Romans afterwards exercised without any restraint. The office was never more fluctuating than in the time of our Saviour. Hence it is said that Caiaphas was high priest for that year, John xi. 51. Persons who had been high priests, and had been removed from the office, still retained the name. Hence more than one high priest is sometimes mentioned, though, strictly speaking, there was but one who held the office.

4 And consulted that they might take Jesus by subtilty, and kill *him*.

'By subtilty.' By guile, deceit, or in some secret manner, so that the people would not know it. Jesus was regarded by the people as a distinguished prophet, and by many of them probably as the Messiah; and the sanhedrim did not dare to take him away openly, lest the people should rise and rescue him.

5 But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

'Not on the feast.' The feast lasted seven days. A vast multitude attended from all parts of Judea. Jerusalem is said

to have contained at such times three millions of people. Amidst such a multitude there were frequent tumults and seditions; and the sanhedrim were justly apprehensive there would be now, if in open day, in the temple, they took away a teacher so popular as Jesus, and put him to death.

6 ¶ Now when Jesus was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

‘In Bethany.’ See note ch. xxi. 1. ‘Simon the leper.’ Simon who had been a leper. It was unlawful to eat with persons that had the leprosy. John, xii. 1, says that this was the house where Lazarus was, who had been raised from the dead. Probably Lazarus was a relative of Simon’s, and was living with him. He further says that they made Jesus a supper, and that Martha served, and that this was six days before the passover. From the order in which Matthew and Mark mention it, it would have been supposed that it was but two days before the passover. Matthew and Mark leave it indefinite, saying that while Jesus was in Bethany he was anointed by Mary.

7 There came unto him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head as he sat *at meat*.

This woman was Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha, John xii. 3. ‘Having an alabaster box.’ A box made of alabaster. The alabaster is a species of marble, distinguished for being light, and of a beautiful white colour, almost transparent. It was much used by the ancients for the purpose of preserving various kinds of ointment in. ‘Of very precious ointment.’ That is, of ointment of much value, rare, and difficult to be obtained. Mark, xiv. 3, and John, xii. 3, say that it was ointment of spikenard. In the original it is ‘nard.’ It was procured from a herb growing in the Indies. It was liquid, so as easily to flow when the box or phial was open, and was distinguished particularly for an agreeable smell. See Cant. i. 12. The ancients were much in the habit of anointing or perfuming their bodies, and the nard was esteemed one of the most precious perfumes. John says there was a pound of this, xii. 3. That there was a large quantity is further evident from the fact that Judas says it might have been sold for three hundred pence, (nine pounds, thirteen shillings, and nine pence sterling,) and that the house was filled with the odour of the ointment. (John.) ‘And poured it on his head.’ They were accustomed chiefly to anoint the head, or hair. John says, xii. 3, that she poured it on the feet of Jesus, and wiped them with her hair. She probably poured it on both his head and his feet. To pour ointment on the head was common. To pour it on the feet was an act of distinguished humility and attachment to the Saviour, and therefore deserved to be particularly recorded.

'As he sat at meat.' That is, at supper. In the original, as he reclined at supper. See note, Matt. xxiii. 6. She came behind him, as he reclined at the table; and bending down over the couch, poured the ointment on his head and his feet; and probably, kneeling at his feet, wiped them with her hair.

8 But when his disciples saw *it*, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose *is* this waste?

'They had indignation.' John says that Judas expressed indignation. Probably some of the others felt indignation, but Judas only gave vent to his feelings. The reason why Judas was indignant was, that he had the bag, John xii. 6, that is, the purse, or repository of articles given to the disciples and to the Saviour. He was a thief; and was in the habit, it seems, of taking out and putting to his own use what was put in for them in common. 'Is this waste.' This loss or destruction of property. They could see no use in it, and they therefore supposed it was lost.

9 For this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

'Sold for much.' Mark and John say for three hundred pence. This to them was a large sum. Mark says, they murmured against her. There was also an implied murmuring against the Saviour for suffering it to be done. The murmuring was, however, without cause. It was the property of Mary. She had a right to dispose of it as she pleased, being accountable not to them, but to God. So christians now are at liberty to dispose of their property as they please, either in distributing the bible, in supporting the gospel, in sending it to heathen nations, or in aiding the poor. The world, like Judas, esteems it to be wasted. Like Judas, they are indignant. They say it might be disposed of in a better way. Yet, like Judas, they are interfering in that which concerns them not. Like other men, christians have the right to dispose of their property, and are accountable only to God.

10 When Jesus understood *it*, he said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon me.

'Why trouble ye the woman?' That is, disturb her mind by insinuations, as if she had done wrong. 'A good work upon me. She has done it with a mind grateful, and full of love to me. The work was good, also, as it was preparative to his death, ver. 12.

11 For ye have the poor always with you, but me ye have not always.

'For ye have the poor,' &c. Mark adds, 'Whosoever ye will, ye may do them good.' It was right that they should regard the poor. It was a plain precept of religion, see Psa. xli. 1. Prov.

xiv. 21; xxix. 7. Gal. ii. 10; and our Saviour would not prohibit it, but do all that was possible to excite his followers to the duty. But every duty should be done in its place, and the duty then incumbent was that which Mary had performed. 'Me ye have not always.' He alludes here to his dying, and his going away to heaven.

12 For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did *it* for my burial.

'She did it for my burial.' It is not to be supposed that Mary understood clearly that he was then about to die; but she had done it as an act of kindness and love, to show her regard for her Lord. Anciently, bodies were anointed and embalmed for the purpose of the sepulchre. Jesus said that this was really a preparation for that burial.

13 Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

'A memorial.' This should be told as a memorial of her piety and self-denial; and it is right that the good deeds of the pious should be recorded and had in remembrance.

14 ¶ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests,

Luke says that Satan entered into Judas. That is, Satan tempted or instigated him to do it. 'Judas Iscariot.' See note, Matt. x. 4. 'Unto the chief priests.' The high priest, and those who had been high priests. The ruling men of the sanhedrim. Luke adds that he went also to the captains, xxii. 4. It was necessary, on account of the great wealth deposited there, to guard the temple by night. Accordingly men were stationed around it, whose leaders or commanders were called captains. Acts iv. 1. These men were commonly of the tribe of the Levites, were closely connected with the priests, were men of influence, and Judas went to them, therefore, as well as to the priests, to offer himself as a traitor.

15 And said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

'And they covenanted with him.' Made a bargain with him. Agreed to give him. Mark says they promised to give him money. They did not pay it to him then, but before he was made sensible of his guilt, they paid him. See Matt. xxvii. 3. Acts i. 18. 'Thirty pieces of silver.' Mark and Luke do not mention



the sum. They say that they promised him money. In the original, 'silver.' In Matthew, in the original, it is thirty silvers or silverlings. This was the price of a slave. See Ex. xxi. 32. And it is not unlikely that this sum was fixed on by them to show their contempt of Jesus, and that they regarded him as of little value. The money usually denoted by 'pieces' of silver, when the precise sum is not mentioned, is a shekel—a silver Jewish coin, amounting to about two shillings and three-pence. The whole sum, therefore, for which Judas committed this crime, was three pounds, seven shillings, and sixpence.

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

'Sought opportunity to betray him.' Luke adds, 'in the absence of the multitude.' The opportunity which he sought, therefore, was one in which the multitude would not see him, or could not rescue the Saviour. 'To betray him.' The word means to deliver up, or to give into their hands. He sought opportunity how he might deliver him up to them, agreeably to his contract.

17 ¶ Now the first *day* of the *feast* of unleavened bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare for thee to eat the passover?

See also Mark xiv. 12—16. Luke xxii. 7—13. 'The first day,' &c. The feast continued eight days, including the day on which the paschal lamb was killed and eaten, Ex. xii. 15. That was the fourteenth day of the month Abib, answering to parts of our March and April. 'Of unleavened bread.' Called so, because, during those eight days, no bread made with yeast or leaven was allowed to be eaten. Luke says, 'in which the passover must be killed.' That is, in which the paschal lamb, or the lamb eaten on the occasion, must be killed. See Ex. xii. 43. Numb. ix. 11. John xviii. 28. Also 1 Cor. v. 7. where Christ, our passover, is said to be slain for us; that is, our paschal lamb, so-called on account of his being offered as a victim, or sacrifice, for our sins.

18 And he said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand; I will keep the passover at thy house with my disciples.

'Go into the city to such a man.' That is, Jerusalem, called 'the city,' by way of eminence. Luke says, that the disciples whom he sent were Peter and John. The man to whom they were to go it seems he did not mention by name, but he told them that when they came into the city, a man would meet them, bearing a pitcher of water. See Mark and Luke. Him they were to follow, and in the house which he entered they would find a room prepared.

The direction which he gave his disciples most clearly proves that he was omniscient. Amidst so great a multitude going at that time into the city, or at any time, it was impossible to know that a particular man would be met—a man bearing a pitcher of water—unless Jesus had all knowledge, and was therefore divine. ‘The Master saith.’ This was the name by which Jesus was probably known among the disciples, and one which he directed them to give him. See Matt. xxiii. 8, 10. It means literally the teacher, as opposed to the disciple, or learner; not the master, as opposed to the servant, or slave. The fact that they used this name as if the man would know whom they meant, and the fact that he understood them, and made no inquiries about him, shows that he was acquainted with Jesus, and was probably himself a disciple. ‘My time is at hand.’ That is, is near. By his ‘time’ here was meant the time of his death.

Mark and Luke add, that he would show them ‘a large upper room, furnished and prepared.’ Ancient writers remark that at the time of the great feasts, all the houses in Jerusalem were open to receive guests; that the houses were in a manner common to the people of Judea; and there is no doubt, therefore, that the master of a house would have it ready on such occasions for company. The word rendered ‘furnished,’ means literally spread, that is, spread with carpets, and with couches, on which to recline at the table, after the manner of the east. See note, Matt. xxiii. 6.

19 And the disciples did as Jesus had appointed them; and they made ready the passover.

‘They made ready the passover.’ That is, they procured a paschal lamb, multitudes of which were kept for sale in the temple; they procured it to be killed and flayed by the priests, the blood to be poured at the altar; they roasted the lamb, and prepared the bitter herbs, the sauce, and the unleavened bread. This was done, it seems, while our Lord was absent, by the two disciples.

20 Now when the even was come, he sat down with the twelve.

‘When the even was come.’ The lamb was killed between the evenings, Ex. xii. 6. (Hebrew). That is, between three and nine o’clock in the evening. The Jews reckoned two evenings, one from three o’clock p. m. to sunset, the other from sunset to the close of the first watch in the night, or nine o’clock. ‘He sat down.’ At first the supper was eaten standing, with their loins girded, and their staff in their hand, denoting the haste with which they were about to flee from Egypt. Afterwards, however, they introduced the practice, it seems, of *partaking of this* as they did of their ordinary meals. Note, Matt.

xxiii. 6. While sitting there at the supper, the disciples had a dispute which should be the greatest, Luke xxii. 24—30. At this time, before the institution of the Lord's supper, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, to teach them humility, John xiii. 1—20.

21 And as they did eat, he said, Verily I say unto you, That one of you shall betray me.

'As they did eat,' &c. The account contained in these verses is also recorded in Mark xiv. 18—21. Luke xxii. 21—23, John xiii. 21, 22. John says, that before Jesus declared that one of them should betray him, 'he was troubled in spirit, and testified.' That is, he felt deeply the greatness of the crime that Judas was about to commit, and anticipated with much feeling the sufferings that he was to endure. 'He testified.' He bore witness; or he declared.

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto him, Lord, is it I?

'They were exceeding sorrowful.' John says, they looked on one another, like men in anxiety, conscious each one, except Judas, of no such intention, and each one beginning to examine himself, to find whether he was the person intended. This evinced their innocence, and showed their attachment to Jesus. It showed how sensitive they were to the least suspicion of the kind. It showed that they were willing to know themselves: thus evincing the spirit of the true christian. Judas only was silent, and was the last to make the inquiry, and that after he had been plainly indicated, ver. 25. The guilty would, if possible, always conceal their crimes. The innocent, the friend, is ready to suspect that he may have done wrong.

23 And he answered and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with me in the dish, the same shall betray me.

The Jews, at the observance of this ordinance, used a bitter sauce, made of palm branches, raisins, &c. mixed with vinegar and other seasoning of the like kind, which they said represented the clay which their fathers were compelled to use in Egypt, in making brick; thus reminding them of their bitter bondage there. This was probably the 'dish' to which reference is made here. John adds, xiii. 23—30, see note on the place, that a disciple (that is, John himself) was reclining on Jesus' bosom; that Simon Peter beckoned to him to ask Jesus more particularly who it was; that Jesus signified who it was, by giving Judas a sop; that is, a piece of bread or meat, dipped in the thick sauce; and that Judas having received it, went out to accomplish his wicked design of betraying him. Judas it seems therefore was not present at the institution of the Lord's supper.

24 The Son of man goeth, as it is written of him:

but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

'The Son of man goeth.' That is, the Messiah; the Christ. Note, Matt. viii. 20. 'Goeth.' Dies, or will die. The Hebrews often spoke in this manner of death, Psa. xxxix. 13. 'As it is written of him.' That is, as it is written or prophesied of him in the Old Testament. Compare Psa. xli. 9, with John xiii. 18. See also Dan. ix. 26, 27. Isai. liii. 4—9. Luke, xxii. 22, says, 'as it was determined.' It was the previous intention of God to give him up to die for sin, or it could not have been certainly predicted. It is also declared to have been by his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, Acts ii. 23. 'Woe unto that man,' &c. He shall be miserable. The crime is great and awful, and he will be punished accordingly. 'It had been good,' &c. That is, it would have been better for him if he had not been born; or it would be better now for him if he was to be as if he had not been born, or if he was annihilated. This was a proverbial mode of speaking among the Jews in frequent use.

If it be asked how this act of Judas could be a crime, when it was determined beforehand that the Saviour should be betrayed, and die in this manner, it may be answered, that the crime was what it was in itself, apart from any determination of God, a violation of all the duties he owed to God, and to the Lord Jesus; awful ingratitude, detestable covetousness and treachery. As such it deserved to be punished. The previous purpose of God did not force Judas to do this. In it he acted freely, of choice. He did just what his wicked heart prompted him to do. A previous knowledge of a thing, or a previous purpose to permit a thing, does not alter its nature, or cause it to be a different thing from what it is. This punishment of Judas proves also that sinners cannot take shelter for their sins in the decrees of God, or plead them as an excuse. God will punish crimes for what they are in themselves. His own deep and inscrutable purposes in regard to human actions will not change the nature of those actions, or screen the sinner from the punishment which he deserves.

25 Then Judas, which betrayed him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

'Thou hast said.' That is, thou hast said the truth. It is so. Thou art the man. Compare verse 64 of this chapter with Mark xiv. 62.

26 ¶ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.



See also Mark xiv. 22—26. Luke xxii. 15—20. 1 Cor. xi. 23—25. As they were eating the paschal supper, near the close of the meal. Luke adds, that he said, just before instituting the sacramental supper, 'With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer.' This is a Hebrew manner of expression, signifying, I have greatly desired. He had desired it, doubtless, that he might institute the supper, to be a perpetual memorial of him; that he might strengthen them for their approaching trials; that he might explain to them the true nature of the passover; and that he might spend another season with them in the duties of religion, of worship. 'Jesus took bread.' That is, the bread which they used at the celebration of the passover, unleavened bread made into thin cakes, easily broken and distributed. 'And blessed it.' Or sought a blessing on it; or gave thanks to God for it. The word rendered 'blessed,' not unfrequently means to give thanks. Compare Luke ix. 16, and John vi. 11. 'And brake it.' This breaking of the bread represented the sufferings of Jesus about to take place—his body broken or wounded for sin. Hence Paul, 1 Cor. xi. 23, adds, 'this is my body which is broken for you.' That is, which is about to be broken for you by death; or wounded, pierced, bruised, and suffering, to make atonement for your sins. 'This is my body.' This represents my body. This broken bread shows the manner in which my body will be broken; or this will serve to call my dying sufferings to your remembrance. It is not meant that his body would be literally broken as the bread was, but that the bread would be a significant emblem or symbol to recall to their remembrance his sufferings. This was a common mode of speaking among the Jews, and exactly similar to that used by Moses at the institution of the passover, Ex. xii. 11: 'It,' that is, the Lamb, 'is the Lord's passover.' That is, the Lamb and the feast represent the Lord's passing over the houses of the Israelites. It serves to remind you of it. So Paul and Luke record Christ's words, 'This is my body broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.' This expresses the whole design of the sacramental bread. It is by a striking emblem to call to remembrance, in a vivid manner, the dying sufferings of our Lord. The sacred writers, moreover, often denote that one thing is represented by another, by using the word 'is.' See Matt. xiii. 37: 'He that soweth the good seed is the Son of man;' that is, represents the Son of man. Gen. xli. 26: 'The seven good kine are seven years;' that is, represent or signify seven years. See also John xv. 1, 5. Gen. xvii. 10. The meaning of this important passage may be thus expressed: 'As I give this broken bread to you, to eat, so will I deliver my body to be afflicted and slain for your sins.'

27 And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

'And he took the cup.' That is, the cup of wine which they used at the feast of the passover, called the cup of Hallel, or praise, because they commenced then repeating the psalms with which they closed the passover. See ver. 30. This cup, Luke says, he took after supper. That is, after they had finished the ordinary celebration of eating the passover. The bread was taken while they were eating, the cup after they had done eating. 'And gave thanks.' See on ver. 26. 'Drink ye all of it.' That is, all of you, disciples, drink of it.

28 For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

'For this is my blood.' This represents my blood; as the bread did his body. Luke and Paul vary the expression, adding what Matthew and Mark have omitted. This cup is the new testament in my blood. The phrase 'new testament,' should have been rendered 'new covenant,' referring to the covenant or compact that God was about to make with men through a Redeemer. The old covenant was that which was made with the Jews by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices. See Ex. xxiv. 8. In allusion to that, Jesus says, 'this cup is the new covenant in my blood;' that is, ratified, or sealed and sanctioned by my blood. Anciently, covenants or contracts were ratified by slaying an animal, by the shedding of its blood; imprecating similar vengeance if either party failed in the compact. 'Which is shed for many for the remission of sins.' In order that sins may be remitted or forgiven. That is, this is the appointed way by which God will pardon transgressions. That blood is efficacious for the pardon of sin, because it is the life of Jesus; the blood being used by the sacred writers as representing life itself, or as containing the elements of life, Gen. ix. 4. Lev. xvii. 14. When, therefore, Jesus says his blood was shed for many, it is the same as saying that his life was given for many. His life was given for sinners as their substitute. By his death on the cross, the death or punishment due to all believers is removed, and their souls are saved. He endured so much suffering, bore so much agony, that God was pleased to accept it in the place of the eternal torments of all the redeemed. The interests of justice, the honour and stability of his government, would be as secure in saving them in this manner, as if the suffering were inflicted on them personally in hell. That he died in the stead or place of sinners, is abundantly clear from the following passages of scripture, John i. 29. Eph. v. 2. Heb. vii. 27. 1 John ii. 2; iv. 10. Isa. liii. 10. Rom. viii. 32. 2 Cor. v. 15.

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.

That is, the observance of the passover, and of the rites shadowing forth future things, here end. I am about to die. The design of all these types and shadows is about to be accomplished. Hereafter we will partake together of the thing represented by these types and ceremonial observances; the blessings and triumphs of redemption. 'Fruit of the vine.' Wine, the fruit or produce of the vine, made of the grapes of the vine. 'Until that day.' The time when they should be received to heaven. 'When I drink it new with you.' Not that he would partake with them of literal wine there, but of the thing represented by it. The kingdom of heaven is often represented under the image of a feast. It means, here, that he will partake of joy with them in heaven; that they will share together the honours and happiness of the heavenly world. 'New.' In a new manner; or, perhaps, afresh. 'In my Father's kingdom.' In heaven.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives.

The passover was observed by the Jews by singing or chanting the 113th, 114th, 115th, 116th, 117th, and 118th psalms. 'Mount of Olives,' see note, Matt. xxi. 1.

31 Then saith Jesus unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

\* Jesus foretells the fall of Peter. This is also recorded in Mark xiv. 27—31. Luke xxii. 31—34. John xiii. 36—38. 'Then said Jesus unto them,' &c. The occasion of his saying this was, Peter's bold affirmation that he was ready to die with Christ, John xiii. 36. 'All ye shall be offended because of me.' See note, Matt. v. 29. It means, here, you will all stumble at my being taken, abused, and set at naught; will be ashamed to own me as a teacher, and to acknowledge yourselves as my disciples. 'For it is written,' &c. See Zech. xiii. 7. This is affirmed here to have reference to the Saviour, and to be fulfilled in him. 'I will smite.' This is the language of God the Father. 'I will smite,' means either that I will give him up to be smitten, compare Ex. iv. 21. with viii. 15, &c., or that I will do it myself. Both of these things were done. God gave him up to the Jews and Romans, and left him to suffer deep and awful sorrows, to bear the burden of the world's atonement alone. See Mark xv. 34. 'The shepherd.' The Lord Jesus, the shepherd of his people, John x. 11, 14. 'The sheep.' This means here particularly the apostles. It also refers sometimes to all the followers of Jesus, the friends of God, John x. 16. *Psa. c. 3, 'Shall be scattered abroad.'*

This refers to their fleeing, and was fulfilled in that. See verse 56 of this chapter.

32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

He did not mean that he would not first appear to some of them, but that he would meet them all in Galilee. This was done. See Mark xvi. 7. Matt. xxviii. 16. 'Galilee.' See note, Matt. ii. 22.

33 Peter answered and said unto him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of thee, *yet* will I never be offended.

This confidence of Peter was entirely characteristic. He was ardent, sincere, and really attached to his Master. Yet this declaration evinced too much reliance on his own strength, and ignorance of himself, and of the trials which he was soon to pass through. And it most impressively teaches us, that all promises to adhere to Jesus should be made relying on him for aid; that we little know how feeble we are, till we are tried; that christians may be left to great and disgraceful sins, to show them their weakness. See note on Luke xii. 31—33.

34 Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice.

'This night.' It was in the evening when this was spoken, after the observance of the passover, and we may suppose at about nine o'clock. 'Before the cock crow,' Mark and Luke add, before the cock crow twice. The cock is accustomed to crow twice, once at midnight, and once in the morning, at break of day. See Mark xiii. 35. The latter was the time familiarly known as the cock-crowing, and of this Matthew and John speak, without referring to the other. Mark and Luke refer to the other, speak of the second crowing, and mean the same time; so that there is no contradiction between them. 'Deny me thrice.' That is, as Luke adds, deny that thou knowest me. See ver. 74.

35 Peter said unto him, Though I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee. Likewise also said all the disciples.

'Will not deny thee.' Will not deny my connexion with thee, or that I knew thee.

36 ¶ Then cometh Jesus with them unto a place called Gethsemane, and saith unto the disciples, Sit ye *here*, while I go and pray yonder.

*The account of Jesus' agony in Gethsemane is also recorded in Mark xiv. 32—42, Luke xxii. 39—46, John xviii. 1. After*



the institution of the supper, in the early part of the night, he went out to the mount of Olives. In his way he passed over the brook Cedron, John xviii. 1, which bounded Jerusalem on the south-east. 'To a place.' John calls this a garden. This garden was evidently on the western side of the mount of Olives, a short distance from Jerusalem, and commanding a full view of the city. The word here means not properly a garden for the cultivation of vegetables, but a place planted with the olive and other trees, a proper place of refreshment in a hot climate, and of retirement from the adjacent city.

Luke says, he went as he was wont, that is, accustomed, to the mount of Olives. Probably he had been in the habit of retiring from Jerusalem to that place for meditation and prayer; thus enforcing by his example what he had so often done by his precepts, the duty of retiring from the noise and bustle of the world to hold communion with God. 'Gethsemane.' This word is made up of two Hebrew words, signifying an olive press, or a press to make olive oil, given to it probably because the place was filled with olives. 'Sit ye here.' That is, in one part of the garden, to which they first came. 'While I go and pray yonder.' That is, at the distance of a stone's cast, Luke xxii. 41. Luke adds, that when he came to the garden, he charged them to pray that they might not enter into temptation; that is, into scenes and dangers that would tempt them to deny him.

37 And he took with him Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

That is, James and John, Matt. x. 2. On two other occasions he had favoured these disciples in a particular manner, suffering them to go with him to witness his power and glory, namely, at the healing of the ruler's daughter, Luke viii. 51, and at his transfiguration on the mount, Matt. xvii. 1. 'Very heavy.' The word in the original is much stronger than the one translated 'sorrowful'; it means, to be pressed down, or overwhelmed with great anguish. This was produced, doubtless, by the foresight of his great sufferings on the cross, in making an atonement for the sins of men.

38 Then saith he unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me.

'Even unto death.' This denotes extreme sorrow and agony. The sufferings of death are the greatest of which we have any knowledge; they are the most feared and dreaded by man; and those sufferings are, therefore, put for extreme and indescribable suffering. 'Tarry ye here.' Remain here. 'And watch with me.' The word rendered 'watch,' here implies to sympathize

with him; to unite with him in seeking Divine support; and to prepare themselves for approaching dangers.

39 And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me : nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.

‘And he went a little further.’ That is, at the distance that a man could conveniently cast a stone. (Luke.) ‘Fell on his face.’ Luke says, ‘he kneeled down.’ He did both. He first kneeled, and then in the fervency of his prayer, and the depth of his sorrow, he fell with his face on the ground, denoting the deepest anguish, and the most earnest entreaty. This was the usual posture of prayer in times of great earnestness. See Num. xvi. 22. 2 Chron. xx. 18. Neh. viii. 6. ‘If it be possible.’ There is no doubt that if it had been possible, it would have been done; and the fact that these sufferings were not removed, that the Saviour went forward and bore them without mitigation, shows that it was not consistent with the justice of God, and with the welfare of the universe, that men should be saved without the awful sufferings of such an atonement. ‘Let this cup.’ These bitter sufferings. The word ‘cup’ is often used in this sense. See note on Matt. xx. 22. ‘Not as I will, but as thou wilt.’ As Jesus was man as well as God, he was deeply affected in view of these deep sorrows. When he speaks of his will, he denotes what human nature, in view of such great sufferings, would desire. Yet he chose rather that the high purpose of God should be done, rather than that it should be abandoned, and regard be shown to the fears of his human nature. In this he has left a model of prayer in all times of affliction. It is right, in times of calamity, to seek deliverance. Like the Saviour, also, in such seasons, we should, we must, submit cheerfully to the will of God—in confidence that, in all these trials, he is wise, and merciful, and good.

40 And he cometh unto the disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with me one hour?

‘And findeth them asleep.’ We are apt to suppose that this was proof of wonderful stupidity, and indifference to their Lord’s sufferings. The truth is, however, that it was just the reverse. Luke has added, that he found them sleeping for sorrow. That is, on account of their sorrow: their grief was so great, that they naturally fell asleep. Multitudes of facts might be brought to show that this is in accordance with the regular effects of sorrow. ‘Saith unto Peter,’ &c. This reproof was administered to Peter particularly, on account of his warm professions, his rash zeal, and his

self-confidence. If he could not keep awake and watch with the Saviour for one hour, how little probability was there that he would adhere to him in all the trials through which he was soon to pass !

41 Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

'Watch.' See ver. 38. Greater trials are coming on. It is necessary, therefore, still to be on your guard. 'And pray.' Seek aid from God in view of the thickening calamities. 'That ye enter not into temptation.' That ye be not overcome and oppressed with these trials of your faith, so as to deny me. They had cherished the belief that he was to establish a kingdom while he lived. When they should see him, therefore, rejected, tried, crucified, dead ; when they should see him submit to all this, as if he had not power to deliver himself, then would be the trial of their faith ; and in view of it, he exhorted them to pray that they might not so enter into temptation as to be overcome by it, and fall. 'The spirit indeed is willing,' &c. The mind, the disposition is ready, and disposed to bear these trials, but the flesh, the natural feelings, through the fear of dangers, is weak, and will be likely to lead you astray when the trial comes. This was not intended as an apology for their sleeping, but to excite them, notwithstanding he knew that they loved him, to be on their guard, lest the weakness of human nature should leave them to fail in the hour of their temptation.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if this cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy will be done. 43 And he came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy. 44 And he left them, and went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words.

It is probable that our Lord spent considerable time in prayer, and that the evangelists have recorded rather the substance of his petitions than the very words. Luke adds, that amidst his agonies, an angel appeared from heaven strengthening him. It may seem strange, since Jesus was Divine, John i. 1, that the Divine nature did not administer strength to the human, and that he who was God, should receive strength from an angel. It should be remembered, that Jesus came not only to make an atonement, but to be a perfect example of a holy man ; that as such it was necessary to submit to the common conditions of humanity ; that he should live as other men, be sustained as other men, suffer as other men, and be strengthened as other men ; *that he should, so to speak, take no advantage from his Divinity.*

but submit, in all things, to the common lot of pious men. Hence he supplied his wants, in the ordinary way of human life; he preserved himself from danger, by the usual ways of prudence and precaution; he met trials as a man; he received comfort as a man; and there is no absurdity in supposing that, in accordance with the condition of his people, his human nature should be strengthened as they are, by those who are sent forth to be ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, Heb. i. 14.

Luke further adds, xxii. 44, that being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. The word 'agony' denotes extreme anguish of mind: the strong conflict produced between sinking human nature and the prospect of deep and overwhelming calamities. 'Great drops of blood,' Luke xxii. 44. The word here rendered 'great drops' means thick and clammy masses of gore, pressed by inward agony through the skin, and mixing with the sweat, falling thus to the ground. This effect of extreme sufferings—of mental anguish—has been known in several other instances. Bloody sweats have been mentioned by many writers as caused by extreme suffering. Dr. Doddridge says, (note on Luke xxii. 44,) that 'Aristotle and Diodorus Siculus both mention bloody sweats, as attending some extraordinary agony of mind; and I find Loti, in his life of Pope Sixtus V., and Sir John Chardin, in his history of Persia, mentioning a like phenomenon, to which Dr. Jackson adds another from De Thou.'

Various opinions have been given of the probable causes of these sorrows of the Saviour. We may suppose, perhaps, without presumption, that many things combined to produce this awful suffering. It was a rush of feeling from every quarter: his situation, his approaching death, the temptations of the enemy, and the awful sufferings on account of men's sins, and God's hatred of it about to be manifested in his own death: all coming upon his soul at once—sorrow flowing in from every quarter—the concentration of the sufferings of the atonement pouring together upon him, and filling him with unspeakable anguish.

45 Then cometh he to his disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

Most interpreters have supposed that this should be translated as a question, rather than a command. 'Do you sleep now, and take your rest? Is this a time amidst so much danger, and so many enemies, to give yourselves to sleep?' This construction is strongly countenanced by Luke xxii. 46, where the expression, *Why sleep ye?* evidently refers to the same part of time. There is no doubt that the Greek will bear this



translation, and in this way the apparent inconsistency will be removed between this command, to sleep, and that in the next verse, to rise and be going. Mark adds, 'It is enough.' That is, sufficient time has been given to sleep. It is time to arise and be going. 'The hour is at hand.' The time when the Son of man is to be betrayed is near. 'Sinners.' Judas, the Roman soldiers, and the Jews.

46 Rise, let us be going : behold, he is at hand that doth betray me.

'Rise, let us be going.' The time when I must die is come. It is no longer proper to attempt an escape.

47 ¶ And while he yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and elders of the people.

The account of Jesus' being betrayed by Judas is recorded by all the evangelists. See Mark xiv. 43—52. Luke xxii. 47—53. John xviii. 2—12. This was done while he was addressing his disciples. John informs us that Judas knew the place because Jesus was in the habit of going there with his disciples. 'A great multitude with swords and staves.' John says, that he had received a band of men and officers from the chief priests, &c. Josephus says, that at the festival of the passover, where a great multitude of people came to observe the feast, a band of men was commanded to keep watch at the porches of the temple, to repress a tumult, if any should be excited. This band, or guard, was at the disposal of the chief priests, Matt. xxvii. 65. In addition to this, they had constant guards stationed around the temple, composed of Levites. The Roman soldiers were armed with swords. The other persons that went out probably carried whatever was accessible as a weapon. These were the persons sent by the priests to apprehend Jesus. 'Staves.' In the original 'wood;' used here in the plural number. It probably means rather clubs or sticks, than spears. John says, that they had lanterns and torches. The passover was celebrated at the full moon. But this night might have been cloudy. The place to which they were going was also shaded with trees, and lights, therefore, might be necessary.

48 Now he that betrayed him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he : hold him fast.

'Gave them a sign.' It was night. Jesus was, besides, probably personally unknown to the Romans, perhaps to the others also. Judas, therefore, being well acquainted with him, to

prevent the possibility of mistake, agreed to designate him by one of the tokens of friendship.

49 And forthwith he came to Jesus, and said, Hail, Master; and kissed him.

'Hail, Master.' The word translated 'hail,' was used by the Jews and Greeks as a mode of salutation among friends. It would here seem to express the joy of Judas at finding his master, and again being with him. 'Master.' In the original, Rabbi. See note, Matt. xxiii. 7. 'Kissed him.' Gave him the common salutation of friends, when meeting after absence. This mode of salutation was more common among eastern nations than with us.

50 And Jesus said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on Jesus, and took him.

In the Greek there are two words which our translators have rendered 'friend;' one implying affection and regard, the other not. One is properly rendered friend; the other expresses more nearly what we mean by companion. It is this latter word which is given to the disaffected labourer in the vineyard: 'Friend, I do thee no wrong;' Matt. xx. 13, to the guest which had not on the wedding garment, in the parable of the marriage feast, Matt. xxii. 12; and to Judas in this place. 'Wherefore art thou come?' This was said, probably, to fill the mind of Judas with the consciousness of his crime: by a striking question to compel him to think of what he was doing.

51 And, behold, one of them which were with Jesus stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high priest, and smote off his ear.

'One of them which were with Jesus.' John informs us that this was Peter. 'Drew his sword.' The apostles were not commonly armed. On this occasion they had provided two swords, Luke xxii. 38. They were under a necessity of providing means of defending themselves against the robbers that infested the country. This will account for their having any swords in their possession. See note on Luke x. 30. Josephus informs us, the people were accustomed to carry swords under their garments, as they went up to Jerusalem. 'A servant of the high priest.' His name, John informs us, was Malchus. Luke adds, that Jesus touched the ear, and healed it; thus showing his benevolence to his foes when they sought his life, and giving them proof that they were attacking Him that was sent from heaven.

52 Then said Jesus unto him, Put up again thy

sword into his place: for all they that take the sword, shall perish with the sword.

'Thy sword into his place.' Into the sheath. 'For all they which take the sword,' &c. Peter was rash. Alone, he had attacked the whole band. Jesus told him that his unseasonable and imprudent defence might be the occasion of his own destruction. In doing it, he would endanger his life, for they who took the sword perished by it. This was probably a proverb, denoting that they who engaged in wars commonly perished in them.

53 Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels?

Peter's conduct implied a distrust of the protection of God, and was an improper resistance of his will. If it had been proper that they should be rescued, God could easily have furnished far more efficient aid than that of Peter—a mighty host of angels. 'Twelve legions.' A legion was a division of the Roman army, amounting to more than six thousand men. See note, Matt. viii. 28. The number twelve was mentioned, perhaps, in reference, to the number of his apostles, and himself.

54 But how then shall the scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?

That is, the scriptures which foretold of his dying for the world. This was said doubtless to comfort his disciples; to show them that his death was not a matter of surprise or disappointment to him; and that they, therefore, should not be offended and forsake him.

55 In that same hour said Jesus to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take me? I sat daily with you teaching in the temple, and ye laid no hold on me.

'Against a thief.' Rather, a robber. It adds not a little to the depth of his humiliation, that he consented to be hunted down thus by wicked men, and to be treated as if he had been the worst of mankind. 'Daily with you in the temple.' For many days before the passover, as recorded in the previous chapters.

56 But all this was done, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook him, and fled.

'The scriptures of the prophets.' He alludes to those parts of the prophets' writing which foretold his sufferings and death. 'Then all the disciples,' &c. Overcome with fear, when they saw their

Master actually taken; alarmed with the terrific appearance of armed men, and forgetting their promises not to forsake him, they all left their Saviour to go alone. Alas! how many, when attachment to Christ would lead them to danger, leave him, and also flee! See note on Mark xiv. 50, 51.

57 ¶ And they that laid hold on Jesus led *him* away to Caiaphas the high-priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled.

The trial of our Lord before the council, and the denial of Peter happening at the same time, might be related one before the other according to the evangelists' pleasure. Accordingly, Matthew and Mark relate the trial first, and Peter's denial afterwards; Luke mentions the denial first, and John has probably observed the natural order. The parallel places are Mark xiv. 53—72. Luke xxii. 54—71. and John xviii. 13—27. 'To Caiaphas.' John says, that they led him first to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas. This was done, probably, as a mark of respect, he having been high priest, and, perhaps, being distinguished for prudence, and capable of advising his son-in-law in a difficult case; and he was detained there probably until the chief priests and elders were assembled. 'The high priest.' Note, Matt. xxvi. 3. John says, he was high priest for that year. Annas had been high priest some years before. In the time of our Saviour the office was frequently changed by the civil ruler. Note, John xi. 49, 50. 'The scribes and elders.' The men composing the great council of the nation or sanhedrim. Note, Matt. v. 22. It is not probable that they could be immediately assembled, and some part of the transaction respecting the denial of Peter probably took place while they were collecting.

58 But Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants to see the end.

'Peter followed afar off.' By this he evinced real attachment to his Master; a desire to be near him, with fear respecting his personal safety. He therefore kept so far off as to be out of danger, and yet so near as that he might witness the transactions respecting his Master. Many, in this, imitate Peter. They are afraid to follow the Saviour closely. They fear danger, ridicule, or persecution. Religion requires us to be near to Christ. We may measure our piety by our desire to be with him, and to be like him; and by our willingness to follow him, through trials, contempt, persecution, and death. 'Unto the high priest's palace.' The word means rather the hall, or middle court or area of his house. *It was situated in the centre of the palace, and was commonly uncovered.* See note, Matt. ix. 1—8. 'Sat with the servants to see the



end.' That is, the end of the trial : or to see how it would go with his Master. The other evangelists say that he stood with the servants warming himself. John says, it being cold, they had made a fire of coals, and warmed themselves. It was then probably not far from midnight. The place where they were was uncovered ; and travellers say, that though the days are warm in Judea, at that season of the year, yet the nights are often uncomfortably cold. This fire was made in the hall ; not in a fireplace as we commonly suppose, but on the pavement. At this place and time was Peter's first denial of his Lord, as is recorded afterwards. See ver. 69.

59 Now the chief priests, and elders, and all the council, sought false witness against Jesus, to put him to death ;

' False witness.' Witnesses that would accuse him of crime ; of violations of the laws of the land or of God. They were indifferent, probably, whether they were true or false, if they could succeed in condemning him.

60 But found none : yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none. At the last came two false witnesses,

' Found none.' Mark says, xiv. 56, that ' their witness agreed not together.' They differed about facts, times, and circumstances, as all false witnesses do. Two witnesses were required by their law, and they did not dare to condemn him without conforming, in appearance at least, to the requirements of the law.

61 And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days.

' And said, this fellow said,' &c. According to Mark, they said, ' We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days, I will build another made without hands.' He adds, ' but neither so did their witness agree together.' That which they attempted to accuse him of, is what he had said respecting his body, and their destroying it, John ii. 19. ' Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' This he spoke of his body ; they perverted it, endeavouring to show that he meant the temple at Jerusalem. They neither stated it as it was, nor did they state correctly its meaning ; nor did they agree about the words used. It was, therefore, little to their purpose.

62 And the high-priest arose, and said unto him, Answerest thou nothing ? what is it which these witness against thee ? 63 But Jesus held his peace. And the high-priest answered and said unto him, I

adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God.

'Jesus held his peace.' Was silent. He knew that the evidence did not even appear to amount to any thing worth a reply. See Isa. liii. 7. 'I adjure thee by the living God.' I put thee upon thy oath before God. This was the usual form of putting an oath among the Jews. It implies calling God to witness the truth of what was said. The law respecting witnesses also made it a violation of an oath to conceal any part of the truth. They had utterly failed in their proof. They had no way left to accomplish their purpose of condemning him, but to draw it from his own lips. This cunning question was therefore proposed. The difficulty consisted in this: If he confessed that he was the Son of God, they stood ready to condemn him for blasphemy. If he denied it, they were prepared to condemn him for being an impostor, for deluding the people under the pretence of being the Messiah. 'The living God.' Jehovah is called the 'living God,' in opposition to idols, which were without life. 'The Christ,' The Messiah, the Anointed. Note, Matt. i. 1. 'The Son of God.' The Jews uniformly expected that the Messiah would be the Son of God. In their view it denoted also that he would be divine, or equal to the Father, John x. 31—36. To claim that title was, therefore, in their view, blasphemy; and as they had determined beforehand, in their own minds, that he was not the Messiah, they were ready at once to accuse him of blasphemy.

64 Jesus saith unto him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.

'Thou hast said.' This is a form of assenting, or affirming. Thou hast said the truth; or, as Luke xxii. 70, has it, 'Ye say that I am.' 'Nevertheless.' This word should have been translated 'moreover,' or furthermore. What follows is designed to explain and give confirmation to what he had said. You shall see proofs of this hereafter. 'Sitting on the right hand of power,' That is, of God, here called the Power, equivalent to the Mighty, or the Almighty. It denotes dignity and majesty, as to sit at the right hand of a prince, was the chief place of honour. See note, Matt. xx. 21. 'Coming in the clouds of heaven.' See note, Matt. xxiv. xxv. The meaning of this is, You shall see the sign from heaven which you have so often demanded, even the Messiah, himself as the sign, returning with great glory, to destroy your city, and to judge the world.

65 Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.

The Jews were accustomed to rend their clothes, as a token of grief. This was done often as a matter of form, and consisted in tearing a particular part of the garment reserved for this purpose. But it was not lawful for the high priest to rend his clothes, Lev. x. 6; xxi. 10. It was done on this occasion to denote great grief on the part of the high priest, that such a sin as blasphemy had been committed in his presence. 'He hath spoken blasphemy.' That is, he has, under oath, arrogated to himself what belongs to God. In claiming to be the Messiah; in asserting that he was the Son of God, and therefore equal in dignity with the Father; and that he would yet sit at his right hand; he has claimed what belongs to no man, and what is therefore an invasion of the Divine prerogative. If he had not been the Messiah, the charge would have been true. This point, the only proper point of inquiry, they never examined. Every thing like a pretension to his being the Messiah was, in their view, proof that he deserved to die.

66 What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

'What think ye?' What is your opinion? What sentence do you pronounce? As president of the sanhedrim he demanded their judgment. 'He is guilty of death.' This was the form which was used when a criminal was condemned to die. The meaning is, he is found guilty of a crime to which the law annexes death. The law under which they condemned him was that recorded in Lev. xxiv. 10—16, which condemned him that was guilty of blasphemy to death by stoning. The chief priests, however, were unwilling to excite a popular tumult by stoning him, and they therefore consulted to deliver him to the Romans to be crucified, under the authority of the Roman name, and thus to prevent any excitement among the people.

67 Then did they spit in his face, and buffeted him; and others smote *him* with the palms of their hands,

'They spit in his face.' This, among the Jews, and other eastern nations, was significant of the highest contempt and insult, Numb. xii. 14. Isa. l. 6. Job xxx. 10. 'And buffeted him.' That is, they struck him with their hands. 'Others smote him with the palms of their hands.' The word used means to strike the mouth with the open hand, as if to prevent a person's speaking, or to evince abhorrence of what he had spoken.

68 Saying, Prophecy unto us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?

'Saying, Prophecy unto us,' &c. Mark informs us that before they said this they had blindfolded him. Having prevented his seeing, they ridiculed his pretensions of being the Messiah. If he

was the Christ, they required him to tell who smote him. The word prophesy not only means to foretell future events, but also to declare any thing that is unknown, or any thing which cannot be known without revelation ; it was here spoken in mockery.

69 ¶ Now Peter sat without in the palace : and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee.

Mark says, the first denial took place while Peter was beneath in the palace. This palace was the large hall or court belonging to the residence of the high priest. The part of it where Jesus and the council were, was probably elevated above the rest, for a tribunal. Peter was beneath, or in the lower parts of the hall, with the servants, at the fire. Yet, as Matthew says he sat without in the palace—that is, out of the place where they were trying Jesus—in the lower part of the hall with the servants—both narratives are consistent. ‘And a damsel came unto him.’ John, xviii, 17, says that this damsel was one that kept the door. ‘Thou wast also with Jesus of Galilee.’ Probably she suspected him from his being in company with John. This was in the early part of the trial of Jesus, perhaps not long after midnight.

70 But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest.

He denied that he was a disciple ; he denied that he knew Jesus ; he denied (Mark) that he understood what was meant—that is, he did not see any reason why this question was asked. All this was palpable falsehood ; and Peter must have known that it was such.

71 And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with Jesus of Nazareth. 72 And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man.

‘The porch.’ The entrance, or the small apartment between the outer door and the large hall in the centre of the building. Peter was embarrassed and confused by the question ; and went away from the fire into the porch, where he expected to be unobserved. Yet in vain. By the very movement to avoid detection he came into contact with another who knew him, and repeated the charge. How clearly does it prove that our Lord was omniscient, that all these things were foreseen ! ‘Another maid saw him.’ From Luke it would appear that a man spoke to him, Luke xxii, 58. Probably both saw him. When he first went out, a *maid* charged him with being a follower of Jesus. To this charge he might have been silent—thinking, perhaps, that he was *concealed*. Yet it is very likely that the charge would be repeated. A man also might have repeated it ; and Peter, irritated,



provoked, then denied his Master the second time. This denial was in a stronger manner, and with an oath. While in the porch, Mark says, the cock crew; that is, the first crowing, or not far from midnight.

73 And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Peter, by this time, had returned into the palace or hall, and stood warming himself by the fire, John xviii. 25. 'Thy speech bewrayeth thee.' Your language makes it manifest that you are of his company. In Mark, 'Thou art a Galilean; and thy speech agreeth thereto.' The Galileans were distinguished for peculiarity of pronunciation. This charge, John says, xviii. 26, was supported by the express affirmation of a kinsman of Malchus, the servant of the high priest, that he had seen him in the garden.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew.

Peter was now irritated beyond endurance. He could no longer resist the evidence that he was known. It had been repeatedly charged on him. His language had betrayed him, and there was a positive witness who had seen him. He then added to the awful sin of denying his Lord, the deep aggravation of profane cursing and swearing. Immediately then the cock crew; that is, the second crowing, or not far from three in the morning.

75 And Peter remembered the words of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

Luke has mentioned a beautiful and touching circumstance omitted by the other evangelists, that when the cock crew, Jesus turned and looked upon Peter, and that then he remembered his words. They were in the same room—Jesus at the upper end of the hall, devoted for a tribunal, and Peter below with the servants; so that Jesus could look down upon Peter standing near the fire. By a single glance of his eye, the injured Saviour brought to remembrance all Peter's promises, his own predictions, and the great guilt of the disciple; he overwhelmed him with the remembrance of his awful sin, and pierced his heart through with many sorrows. The consciousness of deep and awful guilt rushed over Peter's soul; he flew from the palace, he went alone in the darkness of the night, and wept bitterly.

The fall of Peter is one of the most melancholy instances of depravity ever committed in our world. Distinguished throughout the ministry of Christ with peculiar favours; cautioned against

this very thing; yet so soon denying him, forgetting his promises, and profanely calling on God to witness what he knew to be false, that he did not know him! Had it been but once, it would have been awful guilt—guilt deeply piercing the Redeemer's soul in the day of trial; but it was three times repeated, and at last with profane cursing and swearing. Yet while we weep over Peter's fall, and seek not to palliate his crime, we should draw from it important practical uses: 1. The danger of self-confidence. He that thinketh he standeth should take heed lest he fall. True christian confidence is that which relies on God for strength, and feels safety only in the belief that he is able and willing to keep from temptation. 2. When a man begins to sin, his fall from one act to another is easy—perhaps almost certain. At first Peter's sin was only simple denial; then it increased to more violent affirmation, and ended with open profaneness. So the downward road of crime is easy. When sin is once indulged, the way is open for a whole deluge of crime; nor is the course easily stayed till the soul is overwhelmed in awful guilt. 3. True repentance is deep, thorough, bitter. Peter wept bitterly. It was sincere sorrow—sorrow proportioned to the nature of the awful offence he had committed. 4. When we sin—when we fall into temptation—let us retire from the world, seek the place of solitude, and pour out our sorrows before God. He will mark our groans; he will hear our sighs; he will pity his children; and receive them, like weeping Peter, to his arms again. 5. Though a christian may be suffered to go astray—may fall into sin—yet he who should, from this example of Peter, think he may lawfully do the same; or who should resolve to do it, thinking that he might, like Peter, weep, and repent; would give evidence that he knew nothing of the grace of God. He that resolves to sin under the expectation of repenting hereafter, cannot be a christian.

It is worthy of further remark, that the fact that the fall of Peter is recorded by all the evangelists is high proof of their honesty. And it is worthy of special observation, that Mark has recorded this with all the circumstances of aggravation, perhaps even more so than the others. Yet, by the universal belief of antiquity, the gospel of Mark was written under Peter's direction, and every part of it submitted to him for examination. Higher proof of the honesty and candour of the evangelists could not be demanded.

#### CHAPTER XXVII.

1 **WHEN** the morning was come, all the chief priests and elders of the people took counsel against Jesus to put him to death.

Jesus is brought before Pilate. See also Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiii. 1. John xviii. 28. 'When the morning was come.' This was not long after Jesus had been condemned by the sanhedrim. Peter's last denial was probably near the break of day. As soon

as it was light they consulted together for the purpose of taking his life. The sun rose at that season of the year, in Judea, about five o'clock; and the time when they assembled was not long after Peter's denial. 'The chief priests—took counsel.' They had agreed that he deserved to die, on a charge of blasphemy. Yet they did not dare to put him to death by stoning, as they did afterwards Stephen, Acts vii. and as the law commanded in case of blasphemy, for they feared the people. They therefore consulted, or took counsel together, to determine on what pretence they could deliver him to the Roman governor. The charge which they fixed on was not that on which they had tried him, and on which they had determined he ought to die, ch. xxvi. 66, but that of perverting the nation, and of forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar. Luke xxiii. 2. On this accusation, if made out, they expected Pilate could be induced to condemn Jesus. On a charge of blasphemy they knew he could not, as that was not an offence against the Roman laws. 'To put him to death.' To devise some way by which he might be put to death under the authority of the Roman governor.

2 And when they had bound him, they led *him* away, and delivered him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

He was 'bound' when they took him in the garden, John xviii. 12. Probably when he was tried before the sanhedrim, in the palace of Caiaphas, he had been loosed from his bonds—being there surrounded by multitudes, and supposed to be safe. As they were about to lead him to another part of the city now, they again bound him. 'Pontius Pilate, the governor.' The governor appointed by the Romans over Judea. The governor commonly resided at Cæsarea; but he came up to Jerusalem at the great feasts, when most of the Jews were assembled, to administer justice, and to suppress tumults if any should rise. Pilate was appointed governor of Judea by Tiberius, then emperor of Rome.

3 ¶ Then Judas, which had betrayed him, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders,

This shows that Judas did not suppose that the affair would have resulted in this calamitous manner. He probably expected that Jesus would have worked a miracle to deliver himself. When he saw him taken, bound, tried, and condemned; when he saw that all probability that he would deliver himself was taken away; he was overwhelmed with disappointment, sorrow, and awful remorse of conscience. The word rendered 'repented himself,' evidently means no other change than that produced by the horrors of a guilty conscience, and by deep remorse for crime.

at its unexpected results. It was not true, saving repentance; that leads to a holy life; this led to despair and to increase of crime in his own death. Judas, if he had been a true penitent, would have come to Jesus, confessed his crime at his feet, and sought for pardon there. But, overwhelmed only with remorse, and the conviction of vast guilt, he sought not the offended Saviour, was not willing to come into his presence, and added to the crime of a traitor, that of a self-murderer. Assuredly such a man could not be a true penitent.

4 Saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What *is that* to us? See thou *to that*.

'In that I have betrayed the innocent blood.' That is, in betraying an innocent being to death. The meaning is, that he knew and felt that Jesus was innocent. This confession is a remarkable proof that Jesus was innocent. Judas had been with him three years. He had seen him in public and private; he had heard his public teaching and his private views; and if he had done any thing evil, or advanced any thing against the Roman emperor, Judas was competent to testify it. Had he known any such thing, he would have stated it. That he did not make such a charge—that he fully and frankly confessed that Jesus was innocent—and that he gave up the ill-gotten price of treason—is full proof, that in the belief of Judas the Saviour was free from crime, and even the suspicion of crime. 'What is that to us?' This form of speaking denoted that they had nothing to do with his remorse of conscience, and his belief that Jesus was innocent. They had secured what they wanted, the person of Jesus, and they cared little now for the feelings of the traitor. So all wicked men who make use of the agency of others for the accomplishment of crime, will care little for the effect on the instrument. They will soon cast him off, and despise him, and in thousands of instances the instruments of villany are abandoned to remorse, wretchedness, crime, and death.

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

This was an evidence of his remorse of conscience for his crime. He attempted to obtain relief, by throwing back the price of treason; but he attempted it in vain. The consciousness of guilt was fastened on his soul; and Judas found, as all will find, that to cast away or abandon ill-gotten wealth will not satisfy the guilty conscience. 'In the temple.' The place where the sanhedrim was accustomed to sit. 'And went and hanged himself.' Peter says, in giving an account of the death of Jesus, Acts i. 18, that Judas, 'falling headlong, burst asunder in the midst, and all his bowels gushed out.' Matthew records the mode in which



Judas attempted his death by hanging. Peter speaks of the result. Judas passed out of the temple in great haste and perturbation of mind. He sought a place where he might perpetrate this crime. He seized upon a rope and suspended himself: and it is not at all remarkable, or indeed unusual, that the rope might prove too weak and break. Falling headlong—that is, on his face—he burst asunder, and in awful horrors died—a double death, with double pains and double horrors—the reward of his awful guilt.

6 And the chief priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the treasury, because it is the price of blood.

‘The price of blood,’—that is, of the life of a man—they justly considered this an improper and unlawful offering to God. ‘The treasury’ received the voluntary offerings of the people, as well as the half shekel required of every Jew. ‘The price of blood.’ The life is in the blood. The price of blood means the price by which the life of a man has been purchased. This was an acknowledgment that in their view Jesus was innocent. They had bought him, not condemned him justly. They were scrupulous now about so small a matter, comparatively, as putting this money in the treasury, when they had no remorse about murdering an innocent being. Men are very often scrupulous in small matters who stick not at great crimes.

7 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in.

They consulted among themselves about the proper way to dispose of this money. ‘And bought with them.’ In Acts i. 18, it is said of Judas, that ‘he purchased a field with the reward of his iniquity.’ By the passage in the Acts is meant, that he furnished the means, or was the occasion of purchasing the field, it was by his means that the field was purchased. It is very common in sacred as well as in other writings to represent a man as doing that which he is only the cause or occasion of another’s doing. See Acts ii. 23. John xix. 1. Matt. xxvii. 59, 60. ‘The potter’s field.’ The price paid for a field so near Jerusalem may appear to be very small; but probably it had been worked till the clay was exhausted, and was neither fit for that business nor for tillage, and was therefore considered as of little value. ‘To bury strangers in.’ Jews, who came up from other parts of the world to attend the great feasts at Jerusalem.

8 Wherefore that field was called the field of blood, unto this day.

‘The field of blood.’ The field purchased by the price of blood. The name by which this field was called was *Aceldama*, Acts i. 19. ‘To this day.’ That is, to the day when Matthew

wrote this gospel, about thirty years after the field was purchased.

9 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value;

The words quoted here are not to be found in the prophecy of Jeremiah. Words similar to these are recorded in Zech. xi. 12, 13, and from that place this quotation has been doubtless made. Anciently, according to the Jewish writers, Jeremiah was placed first in the Book of the Prophets; and the Old Testament being divided into three parts, the Law, the Psalms, and the Prophets, the third division was called *Jeremiah*, because his book was placed first. Matthew, therefore, quoted the Book of the Prophets under the name of that which had the first place in the book; and though the words are those of Zechariah, yet they are quoted correctly as the words of the Book of the Prophets, the first of which was Jeremiah. 'The price of him that was valued.' The word rendered 'valued,' here, does not, as often in our language, mean to esteem, but to estimate; not to love, approve, or regard, but to fix a price on, to estimate the value of. This they considered to be thirty pieces of silver, the common price of a slave. 'They of the children of Israel did value.' Some of the Jews, the leaders or priests, acting in the name of the nation. 'Did value.' Did estimate, or fix a price on.

10 And gave them for the potter's field, as the Lord appointed me.

'And gave them.' In Zechariah it is, I gave them. Here it is represented as being given by the priests. The meaning is not, however, different. It is, that this price was given for the potter's field.

11 ¶ And Jesus stood before the governor: and the governor asked him, saying, Art thou the King of the Jews? And Jesus said unto him, Thou sayest.

Many things are omitted by Matthew in the account of this trial, which are recorded by the other evangelists. A much more full account is found in John xviii. 28—40. 'And the governor asked him,' &c. This question was asked on account of the charge which the Jews brought against Jesus, of perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, Luke xxiii. 2. They had condemned him for blasphemy; but they well knew that Pilate would altogether disregard an accusation of that kind. They therefore attempted to substitute a totally different accusation, to procure his death on a false charge of treason against the Roman emperor. 'Thou sayest.' That is, thou sayest right, or thou sayest the truth. We may wonder why the Jews did not

press it upon the attention of Pilate as a full confession of his guilt. It was what they had accused him of. Jesus took away all occasion of triumph by explaining to Pilate the nature of his kingdom, John xviii. 36. Though he acknowledged that he was a king, yet he stated that his kingdom was not of this world, therefore it could not be charged upon him as treason against the Roman emperor.

12 And when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing.

‘When he was accused.’ Namely, of perverting the nation, and of forbidding to give tribute to Cæsar, Luke xxiii. 2, 5. Probably this was done in a tumultuous manner, and in every variety of form. ‘He answered nothing.’ He was conscious of his innocence. He knew that they could not prove these charges; and therefore he was silent.

13 Then saith Pilate unto him, Hearest thou not how many things they witness against thee?

‘They witness against thee.’ This means, rather, that they accused him. They were not witnesses, but accusers. They charged him with exciting the people, teaching throughout all Judea, from Galilee to Jerusalem, and exciting them to sedition, Luke xxiii. 5.

14 And he answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

‘To never a word.’ That is, not at all. This is an emphatic way of saying that he answered nothing. There was no need of his replying. He was innocent, and they offered no proof. ‘Marvelled greatly.’ Wondered exceedingly, or was much surprised. Pilate probably was more surprised that Jesus bore this so meekly, and did not return railing for railing, than that he did not set up a defence. The latter was unnecessary; the former was unusual. The governor was not accustomed to see it, and was therefore greatly amazed.

It was at this time that Pilate sent Jesus to Herod, who was then at Jerusalem, attending the feast of the passover, Luke xxiii. 6—12. Herod, having examined him, and finding no cause of death in him, sent him back to Pilate. Pleased with the respect which had been shown him, Herod laid aside his enmity against Pilate, and they became friends.

15 ¶ Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would.

See also the parallel places in Mark xv. 6—14; Luke xxiii. 17.—23. John xviii. 39, 40. ‘At that feast.’ The feast of the Passover. ‘The governor was wont to release,’ &c. Was accustomed to release. From what this custom arose, or by whom it was introduced, is not known. It was probably adopted to

secure popularity among the Jews, and to render the government of the Romans less odious.

16 And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

The word 'notable' means one that is distinguished in any way, either for great virtues, or great crimes. In this place, it evidently means the latter, Luke xxiii. 19.

17 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or Jesus which is called Christ?

Pilate was satisfied of the innocence of Jesus, Luke xxiii. 13—16. He was therefore desirous of releasing him. He knew that Jesus, though condemned by the chief priests, was popular among the people. He therefore attempted in this manner to rescue him from the hands of the priests, and expected that the people would prefer him, to an infamous robber and murderer. 'Jesus which is called Christ.' That is, Jesus who claims to be the Messiah. Pilate used the name which Jesus had among the people, Mark, xv. 9, adds that he asked them whether they would that he should release the king of the Jews? It is probable that he asked the question in both ways. Matthew has recorded one way in which it was asked, and Mark another. He asked them whether they would demand him who was called the Christ, expecting that they would be moved by the claims of the Messiah, claims which, when he entered Jerusalem in triumph, and in the temple, they had acknowledged. He asked them whether they would have the king of the Jews, to ridicule the priests who had delivered him on that charge. There he stood, apparently a poor, inoffensive, unarmed, and despised man. The charge, therefore, of the priests, that he was a king opposed to the Roman emperor, was quite ridiculous; and Pilate expecting the people would see it so, hoped also that they would ask for him to be released.

18 (For he knew that for envy they had delivered him.)

Envy at his popularity: he drew away the people from his accusers. As Pilate knew this, he was bound to release Jesus himself. As a governor and judge, he was bound to protect the innocent, and should, in spite of all the opposition of the Jews, at once have set him at liberty. But the scriptures could not thus have been fulfilled. At the same time, it shows the wisdom of the over-ruling providence of God, that he was condemned by a man who was satisfied of his innocence, and who proclaimed before his accusers his full belief that there was no fault in him.

19 ¶ When he was set down on the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to



do with that just man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of him.

'Have thou nothing to do,' &c. That is, do not condemn him. Perhaps she was afraid that the vengeance of Heaven would follow her husband and family, if he condemned the innocent. 'That just man.' The word 'just' here has the sense of innocent; or not guilty. She might have been satisfied of his innocence from other sources, as well as from the dream. 'I have suffered many things,' &c. Dreams were occasionally considered as indications of the Divine will, and among the Romans and Greeks, as well as the Jews, great reliance was placed on them.

20 But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy Jesus.

'Persuaded the multitude.' The release of a prisoner was to be to the people, not to the rulers. The people were greatly under the influence of the priests. The priests turned the pretensions of Jesus into ridicule. Hence in a popular tumult, among a changing multitude, they easily excited those, who but a little before had cried Hosanna, to cry, Crucify him.

21 The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. 22 Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with Jesus, which is called Christ? *They* all say unto him, Let him be crucified. 23 And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let him be crucified.

'Whether of the twain?' Which of the two, Jesus or Barabbas? 'And the governor said, Why?' Luke informs us that Pilate put this question to them three times, so anxious was he to release him. He affirmed that he had found no cause of death in him. He said therefore, that he would chastise him and let him go. He expected probably by causing him to be publicly scourged, to excite their compassion, to satisfy them, and thus to evade the demands of the priests, and to set him at liberty with the consent of the people. 'Let him be crucified.' See note on ver. 35. Luke says they were instant with loud voices demanding this. They urged it. They demanded it with a popular clamour.

24 ¶ When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but that rather a tumult was made, he took water, and

washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person, see ye *to it*.

‘He took water.’ The Jews were accustomed to wash their hands when they wished to show that they were innocent of a crime committed by others, see Deut. xxi. 6. Ps. xxvi. 6. They often used signs to represent their meaning. But the mere washing of his hands, did not free Pilate from guilt. He was bound as a magistrate to free an innocent man; and was guilty of suffering the holy Saviour to be led to execution, to gratify the malice of enraged priests, and the clamours of a tumultuous populace. ‘See ye to it.’ That is, take it upon yourselves. Ye are responsible for it, if you put him to death.

25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

‘His blood be on us,’ &c. That is, let the guilt of putting him to death, if there be any, be on us and on our children. We will be answerable for it, and will consent to bear the punishment of it. In all countries, the conduct of the parent involves also the children in many of the consequences of his conduct. The Jews had no right to call down this vengeance on their children, but in the righteous judgment of God it has come upon them. In less than forty years their city and temple were overthrown and destroyed. More than a million of people perished in the siege. Their blood ran down the streets like water, so that, Josephus says, it extinguished things that were burning in the city. Thousands were crucified—suffering the same torture that they had inflicted on the Messiah. So great was the number of those who were crucified, that, Josephus says, they were obliged to cease from it, room being wanting for the crosses, and crosses for the men. To this day also the curse has remained. All classes of men; all the governments of the earth have conspired to overwhelm them with calamity, and yet they still live as monuments of the justice of God, as proofs that the christian religion is true, and standing demonstrations of the crime of their fathers in putting the Messiah to death, and in calling down vengeance on their heads.

26 ¶ Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered *him* to be crucified.

‘And when he had scourged Jesus.’ See note Matt. x. 17. Among the Romans it was customary to scourge or whip a slave before he was crucified. Our Lord, being about to be put to death after the manner of a slave, was also treated as a slave; as *one of the lowest and most despised of mankind*. ‘He delivered *him*,’ &c. He gave him up as a judge when he ought to have

saved his life, and might have done it. Crucifixion was a Roman punishment; it was performed by Roman soldiers; Pilate pronounced the sentence from the tribunal, and Pilate affixed the title to the cross. Pilate, therefore, as well as the Jews, was answerable to God for the death of the Saviour of the world.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

See also Mark xv. 15—20. John xix 1—3. 'Into the common hall.' The original word here means rather the governor's palace, or dwelling. The trial of Jesus had taken place out of the palace. Jesus, being condemned, was led by the soldiers away from the Jews within the palace, and subjected to their profane mockery and sport. 'The whole band.' The band or cohort was a tenth part of a Roman legion, and consisted of from four hundred to six hundred men, according to the size of the legion.

28 And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

'And they stripped him.' They took off all his upper garments. 'A scarlet robe.' Mark says they clothed him in purple. The ancients gave the name purple to any colour that had a mixture of red in it, and consequently these different colours might be sometimes called by the same name. The robe here used was the kind worn by Roman generals, and other distinguished officers of the Roman army, and also by the Roman governors. This was probably one which had been worn and cast off as useless, and was now used to array the Son of God as an object of ridicule and scorn.

29 ¶ And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

'Had platted.' The word 'platted' here means woven together, or having made a wreath of a thorn-bush. 'A crown,' or perhaps rather a wreath. A crown was worn by kings, commonly made of gold and precious stones. To ridicule the pretensions of Jesus, that he was a king, they probably plucked up a thorn-bush growing near, made it into something resembling, in shape, a royal crown, so as to correspond with the old purple robe, and to complete the mockery. 'And a reed in his right hand.' A reed is a straight, slender herb growing in marshy places, and abundant on the banks of the Jordan. It was often used for the purpose of making staves for walking. The word is several times thus used. See 2 Kings xviii. 21. Isa. xxxvi. 6. Ezek. xxix. 6. Kings commonly carried a sceptre, made of ivory or

gold, as a sign of their office or rank, Esther iv. 11; viii. 4. This reed or staff they put in his hand, in imitation of a sceptre, to deride his pretensions of being a king, 'And they bowed the knee.' This was done for mockery. It was an act of pretended homage. The common mode of showing respect or homage for kings was by kneeling or prostration. This was done for sport and amusement; and it shows amazing forbearance on the part of Jesus, that he thus consented to be ridiculed and set at naught. No being, merely human, would have borne it. 'Hail, king of the Jews.' The term 'hail' was a common mode of salutation to a king, or even to a friend. It implies commonly the highest respect for the office, as well as for the person, and is an invocation of blessings on the person. Here it was used to ridicule Christ in every possible way.

30 And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

'And they spit upon him.' This was a token of the deepest contempt and insult. 'And took the reed.' The cane, probably so large as to inflict a heavy blow. 'And smote him on the head.' Not merely to injure him by the force of the blow, but to press the thorns into his head, and thus to add cruelty to insult.

31 And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him. 32 And as they came out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear his cross.

'As they came out.' That is, out of the governor's palace, where he had been treated with such cruelty and contempt, or out of the gates of the city, to crucify him. 'A man of Cyrene.' Cyrene was a city of Lybia, in Africa, lying west of Egypt. There were many Jews there, and they were in the habit, like others, of going frequently to Jerusalem. 'Him they compelled to bear his cross.' John says, xix. 17, that Jesus went forth bearing his cross. Luke says, xxiii. 26, that they laid the cross on Simon, that he might bear it after Jesus. There is no contradiction in these accounts. It was a part of the usual punishment of those who were crucified, that they should bear their own cross to the place of execution. It was accordingly laid at first on Jesus, and he went forth, as John says, bearing it. Weak, however, and exhausted by suffering and watchfulness, he sunk under the heavy burden, and they laid hold of Simon that he might bear one end of the cross, as Luke says, after Jesus. The cross was composed of two pieces of wood, one of which was placed upright in the earth, and the other crossed it, after the form of the letter T. The upright part was commonly so high



that the feet of the person crucified were two or three feet from the ground. On the middle of that upright part there was a projection, which served to keep up the body of the person crucified. This was necessary, as the hands alone were not strong enough to bear the weight of the body. The feet were fastened to the upright piece, either by nailing them with large spikes driven through the tender part, or by being lashed by cords. To the cross piece at the top, the hands, being extended, were also fastened, either by spikes, or by cords, or perhaps in some cases by both. The hands and feet of our Saviour were both fastened by spikes.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, A place of a skull,

'Golgotha.' This is the Hebrew word, signifying the place of a skull. It is the word which in Luke is called Calvary. The word 'Calvary' is a Latin word, meaning skull, or a place of skulls. It is not known certainly why this name was given to this place. The most probable opinion is, that it was a place of execution; that malefactors were beheaded there, or otherwise put to death, and that their bones remained unburied or unburned. Jesus was put to death out of the city, because capital punishments were not allowed within the walls. See Num. xv. 35. 1 Kings xxi. 13. He also died there, because the bodies of the beasts slain in sacrifice as typical of him, were burned without the camp. He also, as the antitype, suffered without the gate, Heb. xiii. 11, 12.

34 They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted *thereof*, he would not drink.

'They gave him vinegar,' &c. It has been doubted whether this was the same drink as that mentioned by Mark, xv. 23, wine mingled with myrrh. It is probable that the two evangelists mean the same thing. Vinegar was made of light wine rendered acrid, and was the common drink of the Roman soldiers, and might be called either vinegar or wine, in common language. 'Myrrh' is a bitter substance, produced in Arabia, but is used often to denote any thing bitter. The meaning of the name is bitterness. See note Matt. ii. 11. 'Gall' is properly a bitter secretion from the liver; but the word is also used to denote any thing exceedingly bitter, as wormwood, &c. The drink, therefore, was vinegar, rendered bitter by the infusion of wormwood, or some other very bitter substance. The effect of this, it is said, was to stupify the senses. It was often given to those crucified, to render them insensible to the pains of death. Our Lord knowing this when he had tasted it, refused to drink. He was unwilling to blunt the pains of dying. The cup which his Father gave him, he rather chose to drink; and he gave himself up to the unmitigated sufferings of the cross.

35 And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

'And they crucified him.' To 'crucify,' means to put to death on a cross. The cross has been described at ver. 32. The manner of the crucifixion was as follows: After the criminal had carried the cross to the place of execution, a hole was dug in the earth to receive the foot of it. The cross was laid on the ground; the person condemned to suffer was stripped, and was distended on it, and the soldiers fastened the hands and feet. After they had fixed the nails deeply in the wood, they elevated the cross with the agonizing sufferer on it; and in order to fix it more firmly in the earth, they let it fall violently into the hole which they had dug to receive it. This sudden fall must have given to the person that was nailed to it a most violent and convulsive shock, so as greatly to increase his sufferings. The crucified person was then suffered to hang commonly till pain, exhaustion, thirst, and hunger ended his life.

This punishment was deemed the most disgraceful and ignominious that was practised among the Romans. It was the way in which slaves, robbers, and the most notorious and abandoned wretches were commonly put to death.

As it was the most ignominious punishment known, so it was the most painful. The position of the arms and the body was unnatural, the arms being extended back, and almost immovable. The least motion gave violent pain. The nails being driven through the parts of the hands and feet which abound with nerves and tendons, created the most exquisite anguish. The exposure of so many wounds to the air brought on a violent inflammation, which greatly increased the poignancy of the suffering. The free circulation of the blood was prevented. The consequence was intense pressure in the blood vessels, which was the source of inexpressible misery. The pain gradually increased. There was no relaxation, and no rest. The sufferer was commonly able to endure it till the third, and sometimes even to the seventh day. The intense sufferings of the Saviour, however, were sooner terminated. This was caused, perhaps, in some measure, by his previous fatigue and exhaustion, but still more by the intense sufferings of his soul. See note on Mark xv. 44. 'And parted his garments.' It was customary to crucify a person naked. The clothes of the sufferer belonged to the executioners. John says, xix. 23, that they divided his garments into four parts, to each soldier a part; but for his coat they cast lots. See note on the place. When Matthew says, therefore, that they parted his garments, casting lots, it is to be understood that they divided one part of them, and for the other part of them they cast lots. 'That

it might be fulfilled,' &c. The words here quoted are found in Psalm xxii. 18. The whole Psalm is usually referred to Christ, and is a most striking description of his sufferings and death.

36 And sitting down they watched him there;

'They watched him there,' That is, the four soldiers who had crucified him. They watched him lest his friends should come and release him.

37 And set up over his head his accusation written,  
**THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.**

'And set up over his head,' John says, xix. 19, that Pilate wrote the title, and put it upon the cross, that is, he caused it to be written, and directed the soldiers to set it up. It was customary to set up over the heads of persons crucified, the crime for which they suffered, and the name of the sufferer. The accusation on which Jesus had been condemned by Pilate, was his claiming to be the king of the Jews. 'This is Jesus the king of the Jews.' The evangelists differ in the account of this title. Mark, xv. 26, says it was 'the king of the Jews.' Luke says, xxiii. 38, 'this is the king of the Jews.' John, xix. 19, 'Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.' But the difficulty may be easily removed. John says, that the title was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. It is not at all improbable that the inscription varied in these languages. One evangelist may have translated it from the Hebrew; another from the Greek; a third from the Latin; and a fourth have translated one of the inscriptions a little different from another. Besides, the evangelists all agree in the main point of the inscription, namely, that he was the king of the Jews.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

'Two thieves,' Two robbers, or highwaymen. To show greater contempt for Jesus, and to treat him with greater cruelty, he was crucified between men of that abandoned character.

39 ¶ And they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads,

'Wagging their heads,' In token of derision and insult. See Job xvi. 4. Psal. cix. 25.

40 And saying, Thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, save thyself. If thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross.

'Thou that destroyest the temple,' &c. Meaning thou that didst boast that thou couldst do it. This was one of the things falsely charged on him. It was intended for painful sarcasm and derision,

41 Likewise also the chief priests mocking *him*, with the scribes and elders, said, 42 He saved others; himself he cannot save. If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him. 43 He trusted in God; let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God.

'He saved others.' It does not seem probable that they meant to admit that he had actually saved others, but only that he pretended to save them from death by miracles. 'If he be the king of Israel,' &c. The people would have been as little satisfied that he was, if he had come down from the cross. They said this for the purpose of insult; and Jesus chose rather to suffer, than to work a new miracle for their gratification. He had foretold his death, and the time had come, and amidst revilings and curses, and the severe sarcasms of an angry and apparently triumphant priesthood, he chose to die for the sins of the world. To this they added insult to God, profanely calling upon God to interpose by miracle, and save him if he was his friend. And all this, when their prophets had foretold this very scene, and when they were fulfilling the predictions of their own scriptures. So wonderful is the way by which God causes his word to be fulfilled.

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with him, cast the same in his teeth.

'The thieves also.' The robbers or highwaymen. Luke says, *xxiii. 39*, that one of them did it, and that the other reproved him and was penitent. The account in Luke may, however, easily be reconciled with that in Matthew, by supposing that at first both of them reviled the Saviour, and that it is of this that Matthew speaks. Afterwards one of them became penitent, perhaps from witnessing the patient sufferings of Christ. It is of this particularly that Luke speaks. 'Cast the same in his teeth.' It means they upbraided him, or reproached him.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

'Now, from the sixth hour.' That is, from our twelve o'clock. The Jews divided their day into twelve hours, beginning to count at sunrise. 'There was darkness.' This could not have been a natural eclipse of the sun, for the passover was celebrated at the time of the full moon, when the moon is opposite to the sun. The only cause of this was the interposing power of God—furnishing testimony to the dignity of the sufferer, and causing the elements to sympathize with the pains of his dying Son. A dark thick cloud, shutting out the light of day, and clothing every object with the gloom of midnight, was appropriate when the Redeemer died,



'Over all the land.' That is, probably over the whole land of Judea. 'The ninth hour.' Till about three o'clock in the afternoon, at which time the Saviour is supposed to have died.

46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

'Eli, Eli,' &c. This language is not pure Hebrew, nor Syriac, but a mixture of both, called commonly Syro-Chaldaic. This was probably the language which Christ commonly spoke. The words are taken from Psalm xxii. 1. 'My God, my God,' &c. This expression is one denoting intense suffering. A person suffering thus, might address God as if he was forsaken—given up to extreme anguish. He himself had also said that this was 'the power of darkness,' Luke xxii. 53. When he was tempted, Matt. iv. it was said that the tempter departed from him for a season. There is no improbability in supposing that he might be permitted to return at the time of his death, and increase the sufferings of the Lord Jesus. In what way this might be done, can be only conjectured. Yet, had there been nothing further, no deeper and more awful sufferings, it would be difficult to see why Jesus should have shrunk from these sorrows, and used such a remarkable expression. Isaiah tells us, liii. 4, 5, that he bore our griefs, and carried our sorrows; that he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; that the chastisement of our peace was laid upon him; that by his stripes we are healed. He hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, Gal. iii. 13, he was made a sin offering, 2 Cor. v. 21; he died in our place, on our account, that he might bring us near to God. It was this, doubtless, which caused his intense sufferings. It was the manifestation of God's hatred of sin to his soul, in some way which he has not explained, that he experienced in this dread hour. It was suffering endured by him, that was due to us; and suffering by which, and by which alone, we can be saved from eternal death.

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *man* calleth for Elias.

This was done purposely to deride Jesus, and his pretensions to be the Messiah. The words Eli, Eli, they might easily pretend that they understood to mean Elias, or so pervert them. The taunt would be the more cutting, because it was the universal belief of the Jews, as well as the doctrine of Christ, that Elias would come before the Messiah. They derided him now, as calling upon Elias, when, as they implied, God refused to help him.

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a

sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink.

John, xix. 28, says, that this was done in consequence of Jesus saying, 'I thirst.' One of the effects of crucifixion was excessive thirst. 'Filled it with vinegar,' John says, xix. 29, there was a vessel set full of vinegar, probably for the use of the soldiers who watched his crucifixion. 'And put it on a reed,' John says, it was put upon hyssop. The hyssop was a shrub, growing so large sometimes as to be called a tree, 1 Kings iv. 33. The stalk of this was what Matthew calls a reed. The sponge fastened to this could easily be extended to reach the mouth of Jesus. This vinegar Jesus drank, for it was not intended to stupify him, or blunt his sense of pain, like the wine and myrrh.

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.

Still deriding his sufferings, and refusing to allow any thing to assuage the thirst of the Saviour of the world in his dying agonies.

50 ¶ Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

He cried, 'It is finished,' John xix. 30. It finished the work of atonement; made the way of salvation clear; rolled away the curse from guilty men; and opened the kingdom of heaven to all true believers. 'Yielded up the ghost.' It means, resigned his spirit, or expired.

51 And, behold, the vail of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the earth did quake, and the rocks rent;

'The vail of the temple.' This was doubtless the vail, curiously wrought, which separated the holy from the most holy place, dividing the temple into two apartments, Ex. xxvi. 31—33. 'In twain.' In two pieces, or parts. This was the time of day when the priest was burning incense in the holy place. The most holy place has been usually considered as a type of heaven, and the rending of the vail to signify that the way to heaven was now open to all—the great High Priest, the Lord Jesus, being about to enter in as the forerunner of his people. 'And the earth did quake.' Or shook. This was a miraculous convulsion of the earth, in attestation of the truth that the sufferer was the Messiah, the Son of God: and as an exhibition of his wrath at the crimes of those who put him to death. It is mentioned by Roman writers. 'The rocks rent.' That is, were torn asunder.

52 And the graves were opened: and many bodies of the saints which slept arose,

Graves or sepulchres were most commonly made among the Jews in solid rocks, or in caves of rocks. The rending of the rocks, therefore, would lay them open. 'And many bodies of the saints arose.' Of course it is not known who these were, nor what became of them. It is probable that they were persons who had recently died, and they appear to have been known in Jerusalem. 'Which slept.' Which had died. The death of saints is often called sleep, Dan. xii. 2. 1 Cor. xv. 18. 1 Thess. iv. 15.

53 And came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

There is nothing said of the reason why they were raised. It is not improbable to suppose that it was, amidst the other wonders attending the death of Jesus, to convince the Jews that he was the Messiah. What became of them after they entered into the city is not revealed, and conjecture is vain. 'The holy city,' Jerusalem, called holy because the temple was there; because it was devoted to God; and the place of their religious solemnities.

54 Now when the centurion and they that were with him, watching Jesus, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the Son of God.

'Centurion.' A captain of a hundred soldiers. He was here placed over the band that attended the crucifixion. 'They feared greatly.' They regarded these things as proofs that God was angry, and they were terrified at the prospect that vengeance was coming on them. 'Truly this was the Son of God.' They had heard, probably, that before Pilate he professed to be the Son of God, and seeing these wonders, they believed that it was true, and that God was now attesting the truth of his professions. The centurion was a heathen, and had probably no very distinct notions of the phrase 'the Son of God;' but he certainly regarded these wonders as proof that he was what he professed to be. Mark, xv. 39, says, that they affirmed that 'this man was the Son of God.' Luke, xxiii. 47, that they said, 'certainly this was a righteous man.' These things were said by different persons, or at different periods of his sufferings, one evangelist having recorded one saying, and another another.

55 And many women were there, beholding afar off, which followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering unto him:

'Beholding afar off.' They were probably part of the time not suffered to come near the cross, because it was surrounded by soldiers. 'Ministering unto him.' Attending him, and providing for his wants. While men forsook him in his trying moments, it

does not appear that any of his female followers were thus unfaithful. In the midst of all his trials, and all the contempt poured upon him, they adhered to their Redeemer. Never did female constancy shine more brightly, and never was a happier example set for all who should afterwards believe on him.

56 Among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's children.

'Mary Magdalene.' Mary of Magdala. She had peculiar cause of attachment to the Saviour, having been relieved by him of a most dreadful calamity, and restored to her right mind, after being possessed by seven devils, Mark xvi. 9. 'And the mother of Zebedee's children.' That is, of James and John, Matt. x. 2. Her name was Sakome, Mark xv. 40.

57 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was Jesus' disciple :

'When the even was come.' That is, some time after three o'clock in the afternoon. See notes on John xix. 31—37. 'A rich man of Arimathea.' There were several cities of this name in Judea. Luke says that this was a city of the Jews, and it is probable, therefore, that it was in the tribe of Benjamin, and but a short distance from Jerusalem. This man sustained a high character. He was an honourable counsellor, Mark xv. 43, he 'waited for the kingdom of God;' was anxiously desirous of the appearance of the Messiah; he was 'a good man and a just;' he had nobly set himself against the wicked purposes of the sanhedrim, Luke xxiii. 51; he was a disciple of Jesus, though he was not openly his follower, because he feared the Jews, John xix. 38.

58 He went to Pilate, and begged the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be delivered.

'He went to Pilate.' Because no one had a right to remove the body but the magistrate.

59 And when Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth,

'He wrapped it in a clean linen cloth.' John adds, that this was done with spices, xix. 40. The Jews were accustomed to use myrrh, aloes, and other aromatics, in large quantities, when they buried their dead. When they were not regularly embalmed, which was a long and tedious process, they inclosed the spices in the folds of the linen, or wrapped the body in it, 2 Chron. xvi. 14. There not being time properly to embalm the body of Jesus, *he was buried in this manner.*

60 And laid it in his own new tomb, which he had



hewn out in the rock : and he rolled a great stone to the door of the sepulchre, and departed.

'In his own new tomb.' John says, xix. 41, that this was in a garden that was in or near the place where he was crucified. This tomb Joseph had prepared for himself, as was not uncommon among the Jews. In this tomb Luke and John inform us that no man had been laid. This was so ordered, in the providence of God, doubtless, that there might be no suspicion about his identity when he rose ; that it might not be alleged that another person had risen ; or that he was raised by touching the bones of some prophet, as happened to the corpse that touched the bones of Elisha, 2 Kings xiii. 21. Further, by being buried here, an important prophecy was remarkably fulfilled Isa. liii. 9. He made his grave—with the rich in his death. 'Which he had hewn out in the rock.' This was a common way of constructing tombs in Judea. See note, Matt. viii. 28. Being cut out of a rock, there was no way by which the disciples could have access to it but by the entrance, at which the guard was placed, and consequently it was impossible for them to steal him away.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the sepulchre. 62 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and pharisees came together unto Pilate,

The Jewish day closed at sunset, and the sabbath at that time commenced. The next day mentioned here does not mean the following day in our acceptance of the word, or the following morning, but the next day in the Jewish way of speaking ; that is, after the next day had commenced, or after sunset. To suppose them to have waited till the next morning, would be absurd ; as the disciples would be as likely to steal him away the first night as the second.

63 Saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

'We remember.' They had either heard him say this, or more probably, had understood that that was one of his doctrines. 'That deceiver.' One of the charges against him was, that he deceived the people. By this title they still chose to designate him, thinking that his death had fully confirmed the truth of the charges against him.

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say unto the people,

He is risen from the dead : so the last error shall be worse than the first.

‘Until the third day.’ That is, during two nights and the intervening day. This proves that when the Jews spoke of three days, they did not of necessity mean three whole days, but parts of three days, as was the case in our Saviour’s lying in the grave. ‘The last error shall be worse than the first.’ That is, the last deception, or taking him from the tomb, pretending that he rose, shall have a wider influence among the people than the first, or his pretending to be the Messiah.

65 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch : go your way, make *it* as sure as you can.

‘Ye have a watch.’ The Jews had a guard or watch of Roman soldiers, who kept watch in the tower of Antonia, at the north of the temple.

66 So they went, and made the sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

‘Sealing the stone.’ The sepulchre was made sure, by affixing the large stone to the entrance in such a way that it could not be removed without detection. It was sealed. The cave in which Daniel was cast was fastened in the same manner, and sealed with the king’s signet, Dan. vi. 17. Possibly on the sepulchre of Jesus was impressed the seal of Pilate—the seal of office—making it doubly sure. ‘Setting a watch.’ That is, as large a number of soldiers as they judged necessary to secure the tomb.

Had all this been done by his friends, it might have been said that they only pretended to secure the tomb, and only pretended that he was dead. But he was adjudged to be dead by the Jews themselves : Pilate was satisfied that this was the fact ; they had their own way about his burial ; he was buried alone ; the place of his sepulchre was made sure—expressly to prevent his being removed ; and they placed around him a guard, to prevent his being taken away by force or strength. His very enemies, therefore, took every possible precaution to place his resurrection beyond the possibility of suspicion of fraud and imposture, and were the very means of furnishing the most striking proof, that his death, burial, and resurrection, were real.

#### CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 IN the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first *day* of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

‘In the end of the sabbath ;’ that is, after the sabbath was fully

completed, or finished. 'As it began to dawn toward the first day of the week.' The word properly means, as the first day approached or drew on, without specifying the precise time. Mark says, xvi. 1, 2, that it was after the sabbath was past, and very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun; that is, as it was about to rise, or at the early break of day. Luke says, xxiv. 1, that it was very early; in the Greek, deep twilight, or when there was scarcely any light. John, xx. 1, says, it was very early, while it was yet dark. That is, it was not yet full daylight, or the sun had not risen. The time when they came, therefore, was at the break of day, when the sun was about to rise, but while it was yet so dark as to render objects obscure, or not distinctly visible. 'The first day of the week.' The day which is observed by christians as the sabbath. The Jews observed the seventh day of the week, or our Saturday. During that day our Saviour was in the grave. As he rose on the morning of the first day, it has always been observed, in commemoration of so glorious an event. 'Came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary.' From Mary Magdalene Christ had cast out seven devils. Grateful for his great mercy, she was one of his firmest and most faithful followers, and was first at the sepulchre, and was first permitted to see her risen Lord. The other Mary was the mother of James and Joses. (Mark.) Mark says that Salome attended them. Salome was the wife of Zebedee, and the mother of James and John. From Luke, xxiv. 10, it appears that Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, see Luke viii. 3, was with them. These four women, Mark says, having bought sweet spices, came to anoint him. They had prepared spices and ointments on the evening before the sabbath, Luke xxiii. 56. They had now completed their preparation and had probably provided more. John mentions only Mary Magdalene. He does this probably because his object was to give a particular account of her interview with the risen Saviour. 'To see the sepulchre.' To see whether it was as it was left on the evening when he was laid there: to see if the stone was still there, by which they would know that he had not been removed. Mark and Luke say that the design of their coming was to anoint him with the sweet spices which they had prepared, and complete the work of embalming.

2 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

'There was a great earthquake.' Rather there had been. It does not mean that this was while they were there, or while they were going, but that there had been so violent a commotion as to remove the stone. 'And sat upon it.' Sat upon it when the keepers saw him.

3 His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow.

'His countenance.' In the original, it refers to his whole person. His general aspect, or the appearance of the angel himself, was, &c. 'Like lightning.' Peculiarly bright and shining. 'His raiment white as snow.' The celestial beings are usually represented as clothed in white, Acts i. 10. Dan. vii. 9. Rev. iii. 4, 5; iv. 4; vii. 13, 14. White, among the Jews, was the symbol of purity, or innocence.

4 And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

'The keepers did shake.' It was night. The appearance was unexpected and terrific. The stone was probably suddenly removed. At the noise, the light, the suddenness of the appearance, they were affrighted. 'And became as dead men.' They fainted, or were thrown into a swoon. The narrative leads us to suppose that it was not long before the women came to the sepulchre, or near the break of day.

5 And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified.

Mark says, 'entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment,' xvi. 5. Luke says, xxiv. 3, 'they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus; and as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments.' Seeing the stone rolled away, and the sepulchre open, they of course anxiously entered into the sepulchre, to see if the body was there. They did not find it, and there they saw the vision of angels, who gave them information respecting his resurrection. Infidels have objected that here are three inconsistencies in the accounts by Mark and Luke: 1. That Mark says the angel was sitting, and Luke says they were standing. Answer. The word in Luke does not of necessity mean that they stood, but only that they were present. 2. It is objected that Luke mentions two, but Mark and Matthew one. Answer. Mark mentions the one who spoke; for it cannot be supposed they both spake the same thing. He does not deny that another was present with him. Luke affirms that there was. This way of speaking is not unfrequent. Thus Mark and Luke mention only one demoniac who was cured at Gadara. Matthew mentions two. The fact that but one is mentioned—where it is not denied that there were others—does not prove that there could not be others. 3. Matthew calls this an angel. Mark and Luke, a man. Answer. Angels in the scriptures, from appearing in the form of men, are often called as they



appear, and are mentioned as men. See Gen. xviii. 2, 16, 33; xix. 1, 5. 'Fear not ye.' Be not agitated, or troubled, that you do not find the body of the Saviour. I know that ye seek him, and are troubled that he is removed; but you need not fear that he has been stolen, you will see him again in Galilee.

6 He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay :

'He is risen, as he said.' He had often predicted that he would rise, but the disciples did not understand it, and consequently did not expect it, Matt. xvi. 21; xx. 19. 'The place where the Lord lay.' The place of a body in a sepulchre was commonly a niche cut in the wall. The sepulchre of David was more than a hundred feet in length, cut out of solid rock under ground, and separated into various apartments. All round the sides of those apartments were niches for the dead; or they were ranged around the sides, in places cut in the solid rock just large enough to contain the body. In such a place our Lord lay.

7 And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

'Tell his disciples.' Mark adds particularly, 'and Peter.' This was a kind message to Peter, who had so recently denied his Lord. It would serve to cheer him in his despondency, and to assure him that his sin had been forgiven; and it shows the tender love and remembrance of Jesus—even for his unfaithful friends.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

Joyful at the news, and wishing to impart it to all, they fled to find the disciples, and tell them that the Lord was risen. 'With fear and great joy.' A confused state of mind, apprehensive in part, perhaps, that it might not after all be true. The news was too good to be credited at once. Yet they had sufficient belief in it to fill them with great and unexpected joy. Perhaps no words could better express the state of their minds—the mingled awe and rejoicing—than those here used. 'And did run,' &c. The city, where the disciples were, was half a mile or more from the place.

9 ¶ And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.

*This was when they left the sepulchre the second time. Jesus*

first appeared to Mary Magdalene, when alone, John xx. 14. Afterwards he appeared to the other women, as related by Matthew. See the accounts of the resurrection harmonized, at the end of this chapter. 'All hail.' The meaning of the word 'hail' here, is, rejoice; a term of salutation connected with the idea of joy: joy at his resurrection, and at meeting them again. 'Held him by the feet.' Or threw themselves prostrate before him. This was the usual posture of supplication. See 2 Kings iv. 37. It does not mean that they took hold of his feet, but only that they cast themselves down before him. 'And worshipped him.' See note, Matt. viii. 2. In this place the word 'worship' seems to denote the homage due to the Messiah risen from the dead; regarded by them now in a proper light, and entitled to the honour which was due to God, agreeable to John v. 23.

10 Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

'Be not afraid.' When in the presence of a heavenly being—an angel, or one who was supposed to be possessed of Divine power—men were commonly struck with great fear, as well as a great sense of their unworthiness. See Luke v. 8. Judges vi. 22, 23; xiii. 21, 22. The women were in like manner alarmed when they saw Jesus: believing him now peculiarly to be a Divine being; seeing him returning from the regions of the dead; and doubtless impressed with a new consciousness that they were unworthy of being in his presence. 'Go tell my brethren.' There is something exceedingly tender in the appellation here used, 'my brethren.' Though he was risen from the dead; though about to be exalted to heaven; yet he did not disdain to call his disciples his brethren. This was calculated still further to silence the fears of the women, and to inspire them with confidence. 'Into Galilee.' Galilee was the northern part of the land. There the Saviour commenced his ministry; and there, away from the noise and confusion of the city, he purposed again to meet them.

11 ¶ Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and showed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.

'When they were going.' Or when they had gone from the tomb. 'Some of the watch.' Some of the guard that had been set around the tomb to keep it safe. 'Showed unto the chief priests.' To Annas and Caiaphas.

12 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto

the soldiers, 13 Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.

They deemed the matter of so much importance as to justify the calling together of the great council of the nation. Notwithstanding all their caution, it was plain that the body of Jesus was gone. They had been at great pains to procure his death. They had convinced Pilate that he was dead. They had placed a guard for the express purpose of preventing his being taken. It would be in vain after this to pretend that he was not dead; that he was in a swoon; that he died in appearance only. They concluded, after consultation, that but one way was left—to bribe the soldiers—to induce them to tell a falsehood, and to attempt to convince the world that Jesus, in spite of themselves, and in the face of all probability, had been really stolen. ‘Large money.’ Much money. This was given to bribe them; to induce them to conceal the truth; and to affirm what they knew was false.

14 And if this come to the governor’s ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

‘The governor’s ears.’ To Pilate. If it is reported to him that Jesus was stolen while you slept. ‘We will persuade him.’ We will convince, or satisfy him, so that he shall not punish you. This they might promise with safety. They knew from the character of Pilate that he could be easily bribed. He had not been inclined at all to interfere in any thing concerning the Saviour, until it was urged upon him by the Jews. He would not be disposed of himself to take any further trouble about the matter, unless the sanhedrim should demand it. This of course they would not do.

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

‘Commonly reported.’ This account of the disappearance of the body of Jesus from the sepulchre is commonly given. ‘Until this day.’ The time when Matthew wrote this gospel, that is, about thirty years after the resurrection.

The resurrection of the Lord Jesus, of which an account is given in this chapter, is one of the most important doctrines of the christian religion, and is attested by the strongest evidence that can be adduced in favour of any ancient fact. He had often foretold his own death and resurrection. See Matt. xii. 40; xvi. 21; xx. 19. There was no doubt that he was really dead. Every proper precaution was taken to prevent his removal by stealth. On the third day the body was missing. In this all were agreed. The disciples affirmed that he was alive. The Jews

hired the Roman soldiers to affirm that he was stolen while they slept, and succeeded in making many of the people believe it. This account of the Jews is attended with the following difficulties and absurdities: 1. The Roman guard was composed usually of sixty men, and they were stationed there for the express purpose of guarding the body of Jesus. 2. The punishment of sleeping while on guard was death, and it is perfectly incredible that they should expose themselves in this manner to death. 3. The disciples were few in number, unarmed, weak, and timid. They had just fled before those who took Jesus in the garden, and how can it be believed that in so short a time they should dare to attempt to take away from a Roman guard of armed men what they were expressly set to defend? 4. How could the disciples remove the stone and the body, without awaking one of their number? 5. The regularity and order of the grave clothes, John xx. 6, 7, show that the body had not been stolen. When men rob graves of the bodies of the dead, they do not wait coolly and regularly to fold up the grave clothes, and lay them carefully by themselves. 6. If the soldiers were asleep, how did they, or how could they know that the disciples stole the body away? If they were awake, why did they suffer it? The whole account, therefore, was absurd. On the other hand, the account given by the disciples was perfectly natural. 1. They account for the reason why the soldiers did not see the Saviour when he rose. Terrified at the vision of an angel, they became as dead men. 2. They affirmed that they saw him. All the apostles affirmed this, and many others. 3. They affirmed it in Jerusalem, in the presence of the Jews, before the high priest and the people. See the Acts of the Apostles. If the Jews really believed the account which they themselves had given, why did they not apprehend the apostles and prove them guilty of the theft and of falsehood? things which they never attempted, and which show, therefore, that they did not credit their own report. 4. In regard to the Saviour, they could not be deceived. They had been with him three years. They knew him as a friend. They again ate and drank with him; they put their fingers into his hands and side; they conversed with him; they were with him forty days. There were enough of them to bear witness. The law commonly requires not more than one or two competent witnesses, but here were twelve plain, honest men who affirmed in all places, and at all times, that they had seen him. 5. They gave every possible evidence of their sincerity. They were persecuted, ridiculed, scourged, and put to death for affirming this. Yet not one of them ever expressed the least doubt of its truth. They bore every thing rather than deny that they had seen him. *They had no motive in doing this, but the love of the truth. They obtained no wealth by it; no honour; no pleasure. They gave themselves up to great and unparalleled sufferings; going from*



land to land; crossing over the sea; and enduring the dangers, toils, and privations of various climes, for the simple object of affirming every where that a Saviour died and rose. If they knew this was an imposition—and if it had been, they would have known it—in what way is this remarkable conduct to be accounted for? 6. The world believed them. Three thousand of the Jews themselves believed on the risen Saviour on the day of Pentecost, but fifty days after his resurrection, Acts ii. 41. Multitudes of other Jews believed during the lives of the apostles. Thousands of Gentiles believed also, and in three hundred years the belief that Jesus rose had spread over and changed the whole Roman empire. Had the apostles been deceivers, that was the age in which they could most easily have been detected. Yet that was the age when converts were most rapidly multiplied, and God affixed his seal to their testimony that it was true.

16 ¶ Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

Judas was dead, leaving but eleven of the original number of the apostles. 'Into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.' This appointment is recorded in Matt. xxvi. 32.

17 And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

'They worshipped him.' Paid him honour as the Messiah. 'But some doubted.' As, for example, Thomas, John xx. 25. The disciples had not expected his resurrection; they were therefore slow to believe. The mention of their doubting shows that they were not easily imposed on—that they had not previously agreed to affirm that he had risen—that they were convinced only by the strength of the evidence.

18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

The Son of God, as Creator, had an original right to all things, to control them and dispose of them. See John i. 3. Col. i. 16, 17. Heb. i. 8. But the universe is put under him more particularly as Mediator, that he might redeem his people, that he might gather a church, that he might defend his chosen, that he might subdue all their enemies, and bring them off conquerors and more than conquerors, Eph. i. 20—23. 1 Cor. xv. 25—27. John v. 22, 23. Phil. ii. 6—11. It is in reference to this, doubtless, that he speaks here—power or authority committed to him over all things, that he might redeem, defend, and save the church purchased with his own blood. His mediatorial government extends therefore over the material world, over angels, over devils, over wicked men, and over his own people.

19 ¶ Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing

hem in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost—

'Go ye, therefore.' Because all power is mine, go, I can defend you, and the world is placed under my control. Though you are weak, yet I am strong. Though you die, yet I live, and the work shall be accomplished. 'Teach all nations.' The word rendered 'teach' here, is not the one that is usually so translated in the New Testament. This word properly means disciple, or make disciples of, all nations. This was to be done, however, by teaching them, and by administering the rite of baptism. 'All nations.' This gracious commission was the foundation of the authority to go to the Gentiles. Jesus broke down the partition wall, and commissioned his disciples to go every where, and bring the world to the knowledge of himself. 'Baptizing them.' Applying to them water, as an emblem of the purifying influences of the christian religion through the Holy Spirit, and solemnly devoting them to God. 'In the name,' &c. To be baptized in the name of the Father, &c. is the same as to be baptized unto the Father; as to believe on the name of Christ, is the same as to believe in Christ, John i. 12; ii. 23; iii. 18. 1 Cor. i. 13. To be baptized unto any one is publicly to receive and adopt him as a religious teacher or lawgiver; to receive his system of religion. Thus the Jews were baptized unto Moses, 1 Cor. x. 2. That is, they received the system that he taught; they acknowledged him as their lawgiver and teacher. So to be baptized in the name of the Father, &c. means publicly, by a significant rite, to receive his system of religion; to bind the soul to obey his laws; to be devoted to him; and trust to his promises. To be baptized unto the Son, in like manner, is to receive him as the Messiah—our Prophet, Priest, and King; to submit to his laws, and to receive him as the Saviour of the soul. To be baptized unto the Holy Ghost is to receive him as the Sanctifier, Comforter, and Guide of the soul. The meaning, then, may be thus expressed: Baptizing them unto the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, by a solemn profession of the only true religion, and by a solemn devotion to the service of the sacred Trinity.

The union of these three names in the form of baptism proves that the Son and Holy Ghost are equal with the Father. Nothing would be more absurd or blasphemous than to unite the name of a creature—a man or an angel—with the name of the ever living God, in this solemn rite. If Jesus was a mere man or an angel, as is held by many who deny his divinity; and if the Holy Ghost was a mere attribute of God; then it would have been the height of absurdity to use a form like this, or to direct the apostles to baptize men unto them. The form of baptism, therefore, has been always understood as an irrefragable argument for the doctrine of the Trinity, or that the Son and Holy Spirit are equal to the Father

20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

‘Lo, I am with you.’ That is, by my Spirit, my providence, my attending counsel and guidance. I will strengthen, assist, and guide you. This also proves that Christ is Divine. If a mere man, or a creature of the highest order, how could he promise to be with his disciples always, or at all? If he was with them always, he was God; for no finite creature could thus be present with many men scattered in different parts of the world. ‘Unto the end of the world.’ The presence of Christ was no less necessary after the time of the apostles than before, and consequently there is no propriety in limiting the promise to his own age. It may, therefore, be considered as a gracious engagement to aid, strengthen, guide, and defend, all his disciples, but more especially his ministers, to the end of time.

# HARMONY OF THE ACCOUNTS

OF

## THE RESURRECTION, APPEARANCES, AND ASCENSION OF CHRIST.

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### I THE RESURRECTION.

As there has been much difficulty felt in reconciling the accounts of the different evangelists respecting the resurrection of Christ, and as infidels have maintained that they are utterly irreconcilable, it may be proper, in closing the notes on Matthew, to give these accounts at one view. One thing should always be borne in mind by all who read the Gospels, namely, that the sacred narrative of an event is what it is declared to be by *all* the evangelists. That a thing is omitted by one does not prove that another is false because he has declared it; for the very object of the different Gospels was to give the testimony of independent witnesses to the great facts of the life and death of Jesus. Nor does it prove that there is a contradiction because one relates facts in a different order from another; for neither of them professes to relate facts in the precise order in which they occurred. The object was to relate the facts themselves. With these principles in view, which are conceded to profane historians always, let us look at the accounts which are presented in the sacred narrative respecting the resurrection, appearance, and ascension, of Christ.

1. Jesus was laid in the tomb on Friday evening, having been wrapped in linen with myrrh and aloes, in a hurried manner, John xix. 39, 40. The women, not apprized of that, or desiring to testify their regard further, prepared spices on the same evening to embalm him, Luke xxiii. 56. As it was too late that night to complete the preparation, they deferred it till the first day of the week, resting on the sabbath, Luke xxiii. 56.

2. On the first day of the week, early, the women completed their preparation, purchased more spices, and properly mixed them to make an unguent to anoint the bandages in which the body was rolled, Mark xvi. 1. Or this may refer to the same purchase as is mentioned by Luke. They had bought them, that is on Friday evening.



3. They came to the sepulchre just as the day began to dawn, or just as the light appeared in the east, yet so dark as to render objects indistinct. It was 'in the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week,' Matt. xxviii. 1. 'Very early in the morning, at the rising of the sun;' or as the sun was about to rise, Mark xvi. 2. 'Very early in the morning,' Luke xxiv. 1. 'Early while it was yet dark,' John xx. 1.

4. The persons who came were Mary Magdalene, Matt. xxviii. 1. John xx. 1; Mary, the mother of James and Joses, Matt. xxviii. 1. Luke xxiv. 10. Mark xv. 40; Salome, the wife of Zebedee, and mother of James and John, compare Matt. xxvii. 56. Mark xv. 40; Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, compare Luke xxiv. 10; viii. 3. and certain others, not specified, Luke xxiv. 1, 10.

5. The object of their coming: 1. To see the sepulchre, Matt. xxviii. 1. 2. To embalm him, or to finish embalming him, Mark xvi. 1. Luke xxiv. 1.

6. While on the way, they inquired who should roll away the stone for them, that they might have access to the body of Jesus, Mark xvi. 3.

7. When they arrived, they found there had been an earthquake, or shaking of the tomb, so that the stone was rolled away, Matt. xxviii. 2. Mark xvi. 4.

8. The angel, who rolled the stone away, had sat down on it, and appeared to the keepers, and frightened them; though he did not appear in this place to the women, but only to the keepers, Matt. xxviii. 2—4. At that time probably our Saviour had risen—how long before the women came there is not known, and cannot be ascertained.

9. When they came there, Mary Magdalene, greatly struck with the appearance, hurried and agitated, and probably supposing that the body had been stolen, left the other women, and ran to the city, at the distance of half a mile, to inform the disciples, John xx. 2.

10. While Mary was gone, the others probably looked round the garden in search of the body, and then came and examined the sepulchre to see if it was not there. The tomb was large, and they entered into it. There 'the angel spake unto them,' Matt. xxviii. 5. 'They saw a young man,' that is, an angel in the appearance of a young man, 'sitting on the right side,' Mark xvi. 5. When they entered he was sitting; as they entered he rose and stood, Luke xxiv. 4. Luke adds that there was another with him, xxiv. 4; this other one was not seen when they entered into the sepulchre, at the time mentioned by Mark; but was seen when they had fully entered in, as mentioned by Luke.

11. The angel charged them to go and tell the disciples and Peter, Matt. xxviii. 7. Mark xvi. 7, and to assure them that he would see them in Galilee. The angel also reminded them of  
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what Jesus had said when they were in Galilee. Luke xxiv. 6, 7.

12. They went immediately towards the city, yet taking a different way from the one Mary had taken, or going in such a way that they did not meet her when she was returning from the city with Peter and John, Matt. xxviii. 8. Mark xvi. 8. 'They said nothing to any man,' Luke xxiv. 9, 10. In Luke xxiv. 10, it is said that it was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, that told these things to the disciples. Not that Luke affirms that they were together when they told them, but that the information was given by them, though perhaps at different times.

13. While they were gone, Mary Magdalene returned to the sepulchre, following Peter and John, who came running, John xx. 2-9. They examined the sepulchre, and found that the body was really gone; but as yet they did not know the reason, not having seen the other women to whom the angel had told the cause, and Mary Magdalene having left the women before the angel had spoken to them. As yet, therefore, she was ignorant of the reason of his removal.

14. Peter and John then left the sepulchre, returned home, and left Mary alone, John xx. 10.

15. While Mary was there alone, she looked into the sepulchre, and saw two angels, probably the same that had appeared to the other women, John xx. 11-13.

16. Jesus appeared to Mary while she was alone at the sepulchre, John xx. 14-18. Thus, according to Mark, xvi. 9, he appeared to Mary Magdalene 'first.'

17. Mary then went to tell the disciples that she had seen him, but they did not fully believe her, John xx. 18. Mark xvi. 10, 11.

18. Afterwards Jesus appeared to the other women, Matt. xxviii. 8. 'As they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail.' This would seem, in Matthew, to be immediately after they had left the sepulchre the first time. But the words 'as they were going' might have been rendered, 'after they were gone.' They do not imply, of necessity, that the appearance took place immediately, but only after they were gone, without specifying the time. Probably it was not long after he had appeared to Mary Magdalene. They would probably return to the garden after they had informed the disciples, and linger around there that they might ascertain what had become of him, or learn whether he had been seen by any one. It was then, probably after they had been away and returned, and after he had been seen by Mary, that they saw him.

## II. APPEARANCES OF JESUS AFTER THE RESURRECTION.

1. To Mary Magdalene, John xx. 14. Mark xvi. 9.
2. To the other women, Matt. xxviii. 9.

3. To Peter, 1 Cor. xv. 5. Luke xxiv. 34.
4. To two disciples as they were going to Emmaus, Mark xvi. 12, 13. Luke xxiv. 13—32.
5. The same day at evening, to the apostles, in the absence of Thomas, 1 Cor. xv. 5. Mark xvi. 14. Luke xxiv. 36. John xx. 19—24.
6. To the apostles when Thomas was present, John xx. 26—29.
7. In Galilee, at the sea of Tiberias, to Peter, Thomas, Nathanael, James, and John, and two others, John xxi. 1—14. This is said to be the third time that he showed himself to the disciples, that is, to the apostles, when they were assembled together, John xxi. 14.
8. To the disciples on a mountain in Galilee, Matt. xxviii. 16.
9. To more than five hundred brethren at once, 1 Cor. xv. 6.
10. To James, one of the apostles, 1 Cor. xv. 7.
11. To all the apostles assembled together, 1 Cor. xv. 7. He was seen by them forty days after he rose—probably conversing with them familiarly.
12. To the apostles at his ascension, Luke xxiv. 50, 51. Acts i. 9, 10.
13. To Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 8. Acts ix. 3—5; xxii. 8.

### III. THE ASCENSION.

1. It was forty days after his resurrection, Acts i. 3.
2. He ascended from the mount of Olives, near Bethany, Luke xxiv. 50. Acts i. 12.
3. It was in the presence of all the apostles, Luke xxiv. 50. Acts i. 9, 10.
4. He was received into a cloud, and ascended to heaven, Acts i. 9—11. Luke xxiv. 51. Eph. i. 20—22.

The following extract from the 'Commentary from Henry and Scott,' published by the Religious Tract Society, differs in some particulars from Barnes, and our readers will derive benefit from comparing the two accounts together:

#### THE RESURRECTION AND EVENTS CONNECTED THEREWITH.

ON THE DAY OF THE CRUCIFIXION.—Friday evening, when Joseph of Arimathea had obtained permission to bury the body of Jesus, the women, both those who had approached the cross, John xix. 25, and those who stood afar off, Matt. xv. 40, followed his remains to the sepulchre. This was similar to many burial places among the Jews, a small room about six feet by nine feet, hewn out in the rock, the door being closed with a stone slab, and having a small enclosed court before it. There the body was left, after it had been hastily wrapped in linen bandages with the spices brought by Nicodemus. Most of the women then returned

to the city without delay, and prepared spices and ointments before the sabbath came on, but Mary Magdalene and Mary the wife of Cleopas, remained weeping near the tomb.

We may here notice the circumstances of our Lord suffering on the day immediately before the Jewish sabbath, and in a place near to which one of his disciples had a new sepulchre. Had his body been left in the hands of his executioners it would have been cast into the common grave of the malefactors. But, as Isaiah prophesied, 'His grave was appointed with the wicked, but with the rich man was his tomb.' And this place was one close at hand, where it could be deposited immediately and secured by the Jewish rulers till the third day, that the evidence of Christ's resurrection might be indisputable. Again, had the body been given up to the immediate followers of our Lord, who had no place of sepulture at hand, they would have carried it to some house, that they might perform the requisite acts of attention to the corpse, but the sabbath beginning before these could be completed, the body would not have been buried at the time appointed for the resurrection, which also would have been the case had the body remained on the cross, as it probably would have done if the sabbath had not approached. Thus God in his providence overrules the actions of men for the accomplishment of the Divine purposes, which, although set forth in prophecy, remain unintelligible to us until fulfilled.

THE DAY AFTER THE CRUCIFIXION, or Saturday. The chief priests and pharisees, having obtained Pilate's leave, secured the sepulchre by fixing a seal upon the stone, and setting a guard of soldiers to watch it, of course satisfying themselves that the corpse was there. Mary Magdalene, and Mary the wife of Cleopas, with Salome, joined in purchasing spices in the evening as soon as the sabbath was over. The words in Mark xvi. 1, signify that they then purchased the spices, which alone would be sufficient to distinguish them from the party mentioned, Luke xxiii. 56.

THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK, Sunday.—Mary Magdalene and her companions set out to go to the sepulchre, very early, as it began to dawn. Before they arrived there was a great earthquake, an angel descended and rolled away the stone and sat upon it, and the guards were affrighted. Our Lord then arose, but none of the evangelists attempt to describe the particulars. The sun was rising when the first party of women already mentioned, drew near, and saw the stone was removed, and that the door-way of the tomb was open. As the tomb fronted the east, the rising sun would shine upon it, so that this could be seen. Mary Magdalene, without examining further, ran to inform the apostles. Her two companions ventured into the apartment or court before the sepulchre, where they saw an angel, under the appearance of a young man, clothed with a white garment, sitting on the stone. The women being affrighted, the angel encouraged them to ap-



proach, saying, 'Fear not ye;' from which some have supposed that the guards were still remaining on the spot, struck with terror. The angel told them to go and inform the disciples. They hastened quickly, but were so overcome with amazement, as not to be able to speak to those whom they first met.

In the mean time, Mary Magdalene, having told Peter and John that the body of Jesus was taken away, the two apostles ran to the sepulchre. John arrived first, and standing on the floor of the outer apartment, stooped down, and looking into the cave or tomb, saw the linen clothes lie. Peter coming soon after went into the tomb, and observed the orderly manner in which the clothes were laid, folded regularly, and not bearing any appearance of having been removed in haste, or in the trepidation which must have attended a removal by his disciples, in the presence of an armed guard and in a moonlight night, had such an attempt been possible, as it was not, for many reasons. John also went in, and began to believe that his Lord was risen. The apostles then returned to their own homes.

Mary returned to the sepulchre and stood weeping in the outer apartment, but looking into the tomb, she saw two angels, who asked why she wept, and having told the cause, she turned round and beheld Jesus, but knew not that it was he till he had called her by her name. She was then sent to relate the glad tidings to the disciples, and as she went, the other Mary and Salome joined her, and while they were together Jesus himself met them, saying, All hail, and when they had worshipped him, gave them a message to the disciples.

Meanwhile the soldiers related in the city what had occurred, and the council of the elders bribed them to spread a false report, that the disciples had stolen the body of Jesus while they slept. This story, although involving many improbabilities and contradictions, became commonly reported among the Jews.

We have now to notice the second company of faithful women, consisting of Joanna and other Galilean females, with some women of Jerusalem, they, having prepared their spices on the Friday evening, rose at an early hour, but the delay in assembling a large party, and other causes, hindered them from arriving at the tomb till after Mary and her companions had left it. On their arrival they found the stone rolled away, and entered the tomb, but finding neither the body nor any to give them information, they were much perplexed, when two angels stood by them, and asked why they sought the risen among the dead, reminding them of what our Lord had told them about his sufferings and resurrection, while he was in Galilee. These women retired from the sepulchre, apparently in a more composed state of mind than the others, and related what they had seen and heard to the eleven, and to others of the disciples.

Though the apostles received from both companies of the women assurances that Christ was risen, they believed not, but still mourned. Peter, however, went again to the sepulchre, but the angels having departed, he only saw the linen clothes.

From Luke xxiv. 34, and 1 Cor. xv. 5, we find that Christ appeared to Peter before the other disciples, and probably early in the day. His next appearance was to Cleopas and another, in the afternoon, as they went to Emmaus; with them he conversed a considerable time as recorded Luke xxiv. On discovering it was their Lord they returned to Jerusalem, a distance of eight miles, with the glad tidings, and while relating to the apostles what had passed, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, conversed with them, showed his hands and side, and when they distrusted for joy, he did eat before them. At this time he breathed on them, and said, Receive ye the Holy Ghost.

**DURING THE REST OF THIS WEEK** those who had seen our Lord informed the other disciples that he was risen, and conversed respecting it, but some still refused to believe, and among them the apostle Thomas.

**ON THE FIRST DAY OF THE WEEK FOLLOWING,** Thomas, and the rest of the apostles, with other disciples, being together at meat, Jesus again appeared to them. He desired Thomas to touch his wounds, who being convinced, exclaimed with devotion and adoration, My Lord and my God! Jesus then mildly rebuked their unbelief and hardness of heart.

**SOME DAYS AFTER,** our Lord showed himself in Galilee to the apostles and to more than five hundred of his disciples, who were assembled by appointment for the purpose, agreeably to his words before his death and after his resurrection. On this occasion he appeared first at a distance, when some doubted, but for their satisfaction he drew near and conversed with them, and declared that all power was given unto him, in heaven and in earth.

**SUBSEQUENTLY** he appeared to Peter and six others of the disciples who had remained together in Galilee. So little had they anticipated their future honourable employment as apostles, that they seem to have resumed their former humble occupation, and were fishing on the sea of Tiberias when Christ had that intimate discourse with them recorded in John xxi.

**AFTER THEIR RETURN TO JERUSALEM** our Lord again gave instructions to his disciples, and commissioned them to preach the gospel to all nations. Whether this was done on one or more occasions does not appear, but **ON THE FORTIETH DAY** after his resurrection, he led them out to the mount of Olives, to the part where the district of Bethany began, and there **ASCENDED** in their sight.

A few observations may be added to the preceding account, respecting the chief difficulties experienced by early harmonists; *this was, to reconcile the accounts of the different evangelists respecting the visits of the women to the sepulchre. West was the*

first who published a statement showing that these difficulties might be accounted for on the principle of there being two companies of women; and, singular to relate, Pilkington and Doddridge had at the same time come to a similar conclusion. *Townson* has shown that these two parties of women may easily be supposed to have visited the sepulchre, nearly at the same time, without encountering each other, either in going or returning. He illustrates this by reference to a plan of Jerusalem, compiled from ancient documents. It will be necessary to observe, that the situation of the houses mentioned has been preserved by tradition, and by the erection of churches or public buildings upon their sites; and there is no reason to doubt its being correct, as, though the city was razed from its foundations by the Romans, yet it did not remain long without inhabitants, and the christians returning thither would be guided to the sites they venerated, by the natural elevations of the ground, and the bases of the walls near which these houses were situated. Nor is it difficult to suppose many circumstances which explain Zebedee's possessing a house at Jerusalem, and we are to remember that this account of the resurrection, and the map referred to, were drawn up and framed quite independently of each other, so that their undesigned agreement adds considerable weight to the evidence.

We now have to state the places from whence the first party of women had to proceed. 1. Zebedee's house. This is supposed to have stood near the wall, a little to the north of the Dunghill-gate. Here Salome, the wife or widow of Zebedee, would reside with her son John, and here probably the spices were deposited. The two Marys would proceed from the places where they lodged to this house, and from thence their nearest way to the sepulchre would be through the Dunghill-gate. 2. Joanna, being the wife of Herod's steward, would probably lodge in or near the house of Herod, which was situated to the north of the temple. The direct way from that quarter to the sepulchre would be through the gate of the Valley, and the way thither was quite different from that of the other party. The distance the party of Joanna had to go was more than twice as much as the distance from Zebedee's house, and if they were rather later in starting, there is no difficulty in concluding that their arrival at the sepulchre would be at least an hour later, which is time enough for all that is supposed to have taken place before their arrival.

The first party of women were sent to the apostles. John, we conclude, lived in the house of his father, and Peter evidently was near him; the sites of the houses of James and of Thomas are also pointed out as having been in the immediate neighbourhood. The women therefore, in proceeding thither, would not meet Joanna and her companions advancing by a different road.





## THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MARK.

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### INTRODUCTION.

OF Mark, the writer of this Gospel, little is certainly known. From the New Testament, we learn that he was sister's son to Barnabas, Col. iv. 10; and that his mother's name was Mary, a pious woman in Jerusalem, at whose house the apostles and primitive christians often assembled, Acts xii. 12.

His Hebrew name was John, Acts xii. 12. and it is probable that he adopted a name better known, or more familiar, when he visited the gentiles, a practice not uncommon in that age. He was at first the companion of Paul and Barnabas, on their journeys to propagate Christianity, Acts xiii. 5. He chose not to attend them through their whole journey, but left them at Pamphylia, Acts xv. 38. Afterwards he went with Barnabas to Cyprus, Acts xv. 39. Subsequently he went to Rome, at the express desire of Paul, in company with Timothy, 2 Tim. iv. 11. He remained at Rome while Paul was a captive there, but how long is uncertain, Col. iv. 10. Philemon 24. Eusebius, Epiphanius, and Jerome say, that Mark went from Rome to Alexandria, in Egypt, where he planted a church, and died and was buried in the eighth year of the reign of Nero, A.D. 64.

This Gospel is supposed to have been written between the years 56 and 63. Mark was, for a considerable time, the companion of Peter. Though he had not himself been with the Saviour in his ministry, yet, by his long acquaintance with Peter, he was rendered familiar with the events of his life, and with his instructions. The uniform opinion of the Fathers is, that he was the interpreter of Peter; and that he wrote this Gospel under the eye of Peter, and with his approbation. Its right to a place among the inspired books has never been questioned.

## CHAPTER I.

1 **THE** beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God ;

'The beginning of the gospel.' The word 'gospel' literally signifies good tidings, and particularly the good tidings respecting the way of salvation by the Lord Jesus Christ. It here means the beginning of the good news, or annunciation respecting the Messiah. It was very customary thus to prefix a title to a book. 'The Son of God.' This title was used here, to attract attention, and to secure respect. It is no common history. It recounts the doctrines and doings of the Son of God, when he took upon him the nature of man.

2 As it is written in the prophets, Behold, I send my messenger before thy face, which shall prepare thy way before thee. 3 The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

'As it is written in the prophets.' These places are found in Malachi iii. 1 ; and in Isa. xl. 3. See note on Matt. iii. 3.

4 John did baptize in the wilderness, and preached the baptism of repentance for the remission of sins. 5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all baptized of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins. 6 And John was clothed with camel's hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins ; and he did eat locusts and wild honey ; 7 And preached, saying, There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. 8 I indeed have baptized you with water : but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost.

See notes, Matt. iii. 4—6, 11.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. 10 And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him : 11 And there came a voice from heaven, *saying*, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

See notes, Matt. iii. 13—17.

12 And immediately the Spirit driveth him into the wilderness. 13 And he was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan; and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered unto him.

Matthew has recorded this more at length in ch. iv. 'The Spirit driveth.' The word 'driveth' does not mean that he was compelled forcibly against his will to go there. The Spirit of God, for important purposes, caused him to go. Compare Matt. ix. 25, where the same word is used in the original. 'And when the people were put forth;' in Greek, 'all driven out.' 'And was with the wild beasts.' This shows the desolation and danger of his dwelling there. Amidst want and perils, Satan might suppose he would be more easily seduced from God. 'And the angels ministered to him.' From Luke iv. 2, we learn that in those days he did eat nothing. The angels ministered to him after the days of temptation had expired, as is said by Matthew, iv. 11.

14 Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

John was imprisoned by Herod, Matt. xiv. 3. 'Jesus came into Galilee.' He expected that if he remained in Judea, Herod would also persecute him. Hence we may learn, that when we have great duties to perform for the church of God, we are not wantonly to endanger our lives. When we can secure them without a sacrifice of principle we are to do it. See Matt. xxiv. 16.

15 And saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.

'The time is fulfilled.' That is, the time for the appearance of the Messiah. The time, so long foretold, has come. 'The kingdom of God is at hand.' The time when God shall reign, or set up a kingdom in the hearts of men, by the gospel, is near. See Matt. iii. 2. 'Repent ye.' Exercise sorrow for sins, and turn from them. 'And believe the gospel.' Literally, trust in the gospel, or believe the good tidings—to wit, respecting salvation. See note, Matt. iv. 17.

16 Now as he walked by the sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. 17 And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. 18 And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him. 19 And when he had gone a little further thence, he saw James the son of

Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. 20 And straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after him.

See notes, Matt. iv. 18—22.

21 And they went into Capernaum, and straightway on the sabbath-day he entered into the synagogue, and taught.

See also Luke iv. 31—37. For the situation of Capernaum, see Matt. iv. 13. 'Straightway.' Immediately. On the following sabbath. The synagogue.' See note, Matt. iv. 23. 'And taught.' In the synagogue, the presiding elder, after reading the scriptures, invited some one to address the people, Acts xiii. 15.

22 And they were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.

'He taught them as one that had authority,' &c. See note, Matt. vii. 29.

23 And there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit; and he cried out, 24 Saying, Let us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.

'Let us alone.' Though but one impure spirit is mentioned as possessing this man, yet that spirit speaks also in the name of others, who were leagued together in the work of evil. 'What have we to do with thee?' This seems to mean, 'Have we injured thee?' See 1 Kings xvii. 18. By this the spirit meant to say, that if Jesus cast him out, it would be an improper interference. But this was untrue. Jesus came to destroy the works of the devil, and he had a right, therefore, to liberate the captive, and to punish him who had possessed him. 'Art thou come to destroy us?' Implying that this could not be the intention of the benevolent Messiah; or as in Matt. viii. 29, that the time of their destruction had not come. 'I know thee,' &c. Evil spirits had learned from his miracles that he was the Messiah, and had power over them. 'The Holy One of God.' 'The Messiah.' See Dan. ix. 24. He is called the Holy One of God, because he was eminently pure, the only begotten Son of God—equal with the Father, was anointed, or set apart to the work of the Messiah, the Mediator between God and man.

25 And Jesus rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace, and come out of him.



'And Jesus rebuked him.' It was not the man that he rebuked, but the spirit, for he instantly commanded the same being to come out of the man. In all this Jesus did not once address the man. His conversation was with the evil spirit; proving conclusively, that it was not a mere disease or derangement, but that he conversed with a being, who also conversed, reasoned, cavilled, resisted, and knew him. 'Hold thy peace.' This was a very signal proof of the power of Jesus; to be able by a word to silence an evil angel, and against his will to compel him to leave a man whom he delighted to torment.

26 And when the unclean spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

Still malignant, submitting because he was obliged, not because he chose—he exerted his last power, inflicted all the pain he could, and then came out. This is the nature of an evil disposition. Though compelled to obey, yet, in seeming to obey, it does all the ill it can, and makes even the appearance of obedience, the occasion for increased crime and mischief.

27 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth he even the unclean spirits, and they do obey him. 28 And immediately his fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

'And they were all amazed,' &c. The power of casting out devils was new to them. It was done by a word. He did it in his own name, and by his own authority. This proved that he was superior to all the unclean spirits.

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. 30 But Simon's wife's mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell him of her. 31 And he came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up; and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

See note, Matt. viii. 14, 15.

32 And at even, when the sun did set, they brought unto him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

See Matt. viii. 16, 17. 'At even, when the sun did set,' That is, after the setting of the sun. The Jewish sabbath ended at sunset. Before that, it would have been unlawful for them to have carried the sick to be healed.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

'All the city.' A great part of the city. A great multitude from the city.

34 And he healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew him.

They knew that he was the Messiah. If they had spoken, they would have made that known to the people. Jesus was not desirous, at that time, that it should be publicly announced, and therefore imposed silence on the evil spirits.

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

Luke says, iv. 42, it was day. The passage in Mark means in the original, very early, or while there was yet much appearance of night. The place in Luke means, at daybreak, at the beginning of day. Luke and Mark, therefore, refer to the same time, before it was fully light, or just at day-break. 'And departed into a solitary place and there prayed.' If Jesus prayed, how much more important is it for us! If he did it in the morning, how much more important is it for us, before the world gets possession of our thoughts—before Satan fills us with unholy feelings; when we rise fresh from beds of repose, and while the world around us is still. He that wishes to enjoy religion will seek a place of secret prayer in the morning. If that is omitted, all will go wrong. Our piety will wither. The world will fill our thoughts. Temptations will be strong. How different too was the conduct of the Saviour from those who spend the precious hours of the morning in sleep. He knew the value of the morning hours—he rose while the world was still, and joined with the universal creation in offering praise to the every where present God.

36 And Simon and they that were with him followed after him.

'Simon.' Simon Peter. 'They that were with him.' The other apostles.

37 And when they had found him, they said unto him, All *men* seek for thee.

'All men seek for thee.' That is, many men, or multitudes. The inquiry after him was general.

38 And he said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

'Next towns.' Towns in the neighbourhood of Capernaum. He proposed to carry the gospel to them, rather than that multitudes should leave their homes to attend on his ministry. 'Towns.' The word here rendered 'towns' denotes large places without walls. 'For therefore came I forth.' That is, came forth from God, or was sent by God. Luke says, iv. 43, 'for therefore am I sent.' Compare John xvi. 28. 'I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world.' The meaning of this verse is, Since multitudes press to hear the word, let us go into the neighbouring towns also, for I was sent by God not to preach at Capernaum only, but throughout Judea.

39 And he preached in their synagogues, throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

'And he preached in their synagogues.' See Matt. iv. 23. 'All Galilee.' See Matt. ii. 22. 'And cast out devils.' See Matt. iv. 24.

40 And there came a leper to him, beseeching him, and kneeling down to him, and saying unto him, If thou wilt, thou canst make me clean. 41 And Jesus, moved with compassion, put forth *his* hand, and touched him, and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean. 42 And as soon as he had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed. 43 And he straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; 44 And saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man: but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

'And there came a leper,' &c. See notes on Matt. viii. 2—4. 'Kneeling down to him.' He kneeled, and inclined his face to the ground, in token of deep humiliation, and earnest entreaty. Compare Luke v. 12. 'If thou wilt.' There was an acknowledgment of the almighty power of Jesus, and an appeal to his benevolence. 'Make me clean.' Canst heal me of this loathsome and offensive disease, render me legally clean, and restore me to the privileges of the congregation. 'And Jesus—touched him.' It was by the law considered as unclean to touch a leprosy man. See Num. v. 2. The fact that Jesus touched him was evidence that the requisite power had been already put forth to heal him; that Jesus regarded him as already clean. 'I will.' Here was a most manifest proof of his own proper, divine power. None but God can work a miracle. Jesus does it by his own will—by an exertion of his own power. He was, therefore,

divine. 'See thou say nothing to any man.' The law of Moses required that the man who was healed of the leprosy should be pronounced clean by the priest, before he could be admitted again to the privileges of the congregation, Lev. xiv. Christ required him to be obedient to the law; to go at once to the priest, and not to make delay by stopping to converse about his being healed. It was of importance that the priest should pronounce it to be a genuine cure, that there might be no cavils among the Jews, against its being a real miracle. 'Offer—those things,' &c. Two birds, and cedar wood, and scarlet, and hyssop. And after eight days, two he-lambs, without blemish, and one ewe-lamb, and fine flour, and oil, Lev. xiv. 4, 10. 'For a testimony unto them.' Not to the priest, but to the people, that they may have evidence that it is a real cure.

45 But he went out and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter, insomuch that Jesus could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to him from every quarter.

'Began to publish it much.' He was so deeply affected with it, that he followed the dictates of his own feelings, rather than the command of the Saviour. 'Jesus could no more enter openly into the city.' The word 'could' only denotes that there was inconvenience in his doing it then; that he judged it best not then to enter into the city. His being in the city drew such crowds of people as tended to excite the opposition of civil rulers. 'The city.' The city, or large town, where the leper was cured. The same reason for not entering that city applied also to others, so that he remained in the deserts, where the multitudes could come to him without any difficulty or opposition.

## CHAPTER II.

1 AND again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

'Into Capernaum.' See note, Matt. iv. 13. 'After some days.' Probably he remained long enough in the desert to heal the sick that were brought to him, and to give instructions to the multitudes that attended his preaching. 'And it was noised,' &c. He entered the city, doubtless, privately; but his being there was soon known, and so great had his popularity become that multitudes pressed to hear him.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.



'About the door.' In the court or yard before the door. They could not get near enough to hear him. 'Preached the word unto them.' The word of God; the revelation or doctrine which he came to deliver.

3 And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

See this miracle explained in Matt. ix. 2—8. 'Palsy.' See note, Matt. iv. 24. 'Borne of four.' Borne on a couch, Matt. ix. 2, by four men.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

'The press.' The crowd, the multitude of people. Jesus was probably in the large open area, in the centre of the house. See note, Matt. ix. 1—8. The people pressed into that area, and blocked up the door so that they could not have access to him. 'They uncovered the roof where he was.' It is not improbable that they ascended a neighbouring house, and came over the hall, where Jesus was. They removed the curtain or awning, drawn over the area, so that they might let the man down before him. 'When they had broken it up.' Where they had removed the awning, and a part of the railing, so that they could let the man down.

5 When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

'Their faith.' Their confidence or belief, that he could heal him. 'Son.' Literally, child. See note, Matt. i. 1. In this place, it denotes affection or kindness. It was a word of consolation—an endearing appellation, applied by the Saviour to the sick man, to show his compassion, to inspire confidence, and to assure him that he would heal him.

6 But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts, 7 Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only? 8 And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? 9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*; or to say, *Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk*? 10 But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy.) 11 I say

unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. 12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

'We never saw it on this fashion.' Literally, 'We never saw it so.' We never saw any thing like this.

13 And he went forth again by the sea-side; and all the multitude resorted unto him, and he taught them.

'By the sea-side.' That is, by the sea of Tiberias; see note, Matt. iv. 13.

14 And as he passed by, he saw Levi the *son* of Alpheus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow me. And he arose and followed him.

'Levi the son of Alpheus.' The same as Matthew the writer of the gospel. It was not uncommon among the Jews to have two names. 'The receipt of custom.' See note, Matt. ix. 9.

15 And it came to pass, that, as Jesus sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with Jesus and his disciples: for there were many, and they followed him.

'Sat at meat in his house.' The phrase means 'as he reclined at his meal—or as he was eating.' This feast was made by Matthew, in honour of the Saviour. See Luke v. 29. 'Publicans,' See note, Matt. v. 47. 'Sinners,' Sinners of abandoned character—fit companions of publicans—great sinners. 'There were many.' That is, many disciples. There is no doubt that our Saviour, in the early part of his ministry, was extremely popular. Multitudes of the common people attended him, and gave conclusive evidence that they were his disciples.

16 And when the scribes and pharisees saw him eat with publicans and sinners, they said unto his disciples, How is it that he eateth and drinketh with publicans and sinners? 17 When Jesus heard *it*, he saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

See Matt. ix. 11—13.

18 And the disciples of John and of the pharisees *used to fast*: and they come and say unto him, Why

do the disciples of John and of the pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not?

Were accustomed often to fast. Compare Luke v. 33; xviii. 12. 'And they come and say.' The disciples of John came, Matt. ix. 14.

19 And Jesus said unto them, Can the children of the bride-chamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? as long as they have the bridegroom with them, they cannot fast. 20 But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days. 21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment: else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse. 22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

See Matt. ix. 15—17.

23 And it came to pass, that he went through the corn-fields on the sabbath-day; and his disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

See Matt. xii. 1—8. 'The corn-fields.' The fields sown with grain, wheat or barley. 'To pluck the ears of corn.' They were hungry. See Matt. They therefore gathered the wheat or barley as they walked, to satisfy their appetite. Though our Lord was with them, and though he had all things at his control, yet he suffered them to resort to this mode, the mode of the poor and the needy, to supply their wants. Poverty is not disgrace; God often suffers it for the good of his people; he will take care, in some way, that their wants shall be supplied. It was lawful for them to do this. See Deut. xxiii. 25.

24 And the pharisees said unto him, Behold, why do they on the sabbath-day that which is not lawful?

'That which is not lawful.' That is, that which they esteemed to be unlawful on the sabbath day. It was made lawful by Moses, without any distinction of days.

25 And he said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungered, he, and they that were with him?

'Have ye never read,' &c. See note, Matt. xii. 3.

26 *How he went into the house of God in the days*

of Abiathar the high priest, and did eat the shew-bread, which is not lawful to eat but for the priests, and gave also to them which were with him ?

'Abiathar the high priest.' From 1 Sam. xxi. 1, it appears that Abimelech was high priest at the time here referred to; and from 1 Sam. xxiii. 6, it appears that Abiathar was the son of Abimelech. For a long time, during David's reign, he was high priest; it became natural therefore to associate his name with that of David; to speak of David as king, and Abiathar the high priest of his time. This will account for the fact that he was spoken of rather than his father. At the same time it was strictly true, that this was done in the days of Abiathar, who was afterwards high priest, and was familiarly spoken of as such. 'Shew-bread;' see note, Matt. xii. 4.

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath :

'The sabbath was made for man.' For his rest from the cares and anxieties of the world, to give an opportunity to call off his attention from earthly concerns, and to direct it to the concerns of eternity. It was a kind provision for man, that he might refresh his body by relaxing his labours; that he might have undisturbed time to seek the consolations of religion, and that he might render to God that worship which is most justly due to him as the Creator, Preserver, Benefactor, and Redeemer of the world. And it is easily capable of proof, that no institution has been more signally blessed to man's welfare than the Christian sabbath. To that we owe, more than to any thing else, the peace and order of a civilized community. Where there is no sabbath, there is ignorance, vice, disorder, and crime. Where that day is observed as it should be, order prevails, the poor are elevated in their condition, and the community puts on the appearance of neatness, industry, morality, and religion. The sabbath was, therefore, pre-eminently intended for man's welfare, and the best interests of mankind demand that it should be sacredly regarded as a merciful appointment of Heaven, intended for our best good. 'Not man for the sabbath.' Man was made first, and then the sabbath was appointed for his welfare, Gen. ii. 1—3. The sabbath was not first made or contemplated, and then the man made with reference to that. Since, therefore, the sabbath was intended for man's real good, the law requiring it must not be interpreted so as to oppose the same. It must be interpreted in consistency with a proper attention to the claims of mercy, still, however, in accordance with man's real good on the whole, and with the law of God. The law of God contemplates man's *real* good on the whole, and we have no right, under the plea *that the sabbath was made for man, to do any thing contrary to*



what the law of God admits. It would not be for our real good, but for our real and eternal injury, to devote the sabbath to vice, to labour, or to amusement.

28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

See note, Matt. xii. 8.

## CHAPTER III.

1 AND he entered again into the synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand. 2 And they watched him, whether he would heal him on the sabbath day; that they might accuse him. 3 And he saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

See this explained in Matt. xii. 9—13.

4 And he saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the sabbath days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill? but they held their peace.

It seems to have been a maxim with the Jews, that not to do good when we have an opportunity, was to do evil; not to save life, was to kill, or to be guilty of murder. If a man has an opportunity of saving another man's life and refuses to do it, he is evidently guilty of his death. On this principle our Saviour puts this question to the Jews, whether it was better for him, having the power to heal this man, to do it, or to allow him to remain in this suffering condition. The ability to do good imposes an obligation to do it. He that has the means of feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and instructing the ignorant, and sending the gospel to the destitute, and who does it not, is guilty; for he is practically doing evil; he is suffering evils to exist which he might remove. So the wicked will be condemned in the day of judgment, because they did it not, Matt. xxv. 45.

5 And when he had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts, he saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* out: and his hand was restored whole as the other

'With anger.' With a severe and stern countenance; with indignation at their hypocrisy and hardness of heart. This was not hatred of the men whose hearts were so hard; it was hatred of the sin which they exhibited, joined with extreme grief that *neither his teaching, nor the law of God, nor any means which*

had been used, overcame their confirmed wickedness. 'Hardness of their hearts.' The heart is said to be tender when it is easily affected by the sufferings of others; by our own sin and danger; by the love and commands of God; when we are easily made to feel on the great subjects pertaining to our interest, Ezek. xi, 19, 20. It is hard, when nothing moves it. It is most tender in youth, or when we have committed fewest crimes. It is made hard by indulgence in sin; by long resisting the offers of life, or the appeals which God may make to us by his Spirit or providence. Hence it is, that the most favourable period for securing an interest in Christ, or for becoming a christian, is in youth; in the first, the tenderest, and the best days of life.

6 And the pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him.

'Straightway.' Immediately; or, as soon as possible. 'Took counsel.' Laid a plan. Consulted with them. 'The Herodians.' See note, Matt. xxii. 16. 'How they might destroy him.' They hated him for his holiness; because he reprov'd them; because he laid open their hypocrisy; and because he won the hearts of the people, and lessened their influence. Men would often rather put him to death who reprov's them, than forsake their sins. The pharisees had rather commit any crime, even to the murder of their Messiah, than forsake the sins for which he rebuked them.

7 But Jesus withdrew himself with his disciples to the sea: and a great multitude from Galilee followed him, and from Judea, 8 And from Jerusalem, and from Idumea, and from beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things he did, came unto him.

'To the sea.' The sea of Galilee. Or, to the desert and lonely regions which surrounded the sea, where he might be in obscurity, and avoid their designs against his life. 'Galilee.' See Matt. ii. 22. 'Judea.' See Matt. ii. 1. 'Jerusalem.' Jerusalem was in Judea. It is mentioned particularly to show that not only the people of the surrounding country came, but also many from the capital, the place of wealth, and honour, and power. 'Idumea.' The country formerly inhabited by the Edomites, the most southern part of the land of Canaan. 'Idumea' is a Greek word, derived from the Hebrew, Edom. It signifies the land of Edom, a name given to Esau, one of the sons of Isaac, Gen. xxv. 30. He settled in mount Seir, Deut. ii. 5, on the south of the land of Canaan; and the country of Idumea bounded Palestine on the south. 'From beyond Jordan.'

From the east side of the river Jordan. The sacred writers lived on the west side of Jordan, and, by the country beyond Jordan they meant that on the east side, 'Tyre and Sidon.' See note, Matt. xi. 21.

9 And he spake to his disciples, that a small ship should wait on him because of the multitude, lest they should throng him. 10 For he had healed many; in-somuch that they pressed upon him for to touch him, as many as had plagues.

'A small ship.' Rather, a boat. There were, properly speaking, no ships on the sea of Tiberias. This was probably a small boat that belonged to his disciples, in which he could sit off from the shore, and teach the people, without being pressed by them. 'Lest they should throng him.' He had healed many, and those who were still diseased pressed or crowded on him. He therefore withdrew from the multitude. 'As many as had plagues.' As many as had diseases, or maladies of body or mind.

11 And unclean spirits, when they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, saying, Thou art the Son of God. 12 And he straitly charged them that they should not make him known.

'Unclean spirits.' Persons who were possessed of evil spirits. Thou art the Son of God.' The Son of God, by way of eminence. In this place it is equivalent to the Messiah, who was among the Jews called the Son of God. Hence they were charged not to make him known, because he was not desirous that it should be blazoned abroad that he claimed to be the Messiah.

This circumstance proves the existence of evil spirits. If these were merely diseased or deranged persons, how could they be endowed with knowledge so much superior to those in health? If they were under the influence of an order of spirits superior to man—whose appropriate habitation was in another world—then it is not strange that they should know him, even in the midst of his poverty, to be the Messiah, the Son of God.

13 And he goeth up into a mountain, and calleth unto him whom he would: and they came unto him.

For an account of the appointment of the apostles, see Matt. x. 1—4. 'And calleth unto him whom he would.' Those whom he chose; whom he was about to appoint to the apostleship.

14 And he ordained twelve, that they should be with him, and that he might send them forth to preach,

'He ordained twelve.' The word rendered 'ordained,' means literally 'he made,' or he appointed twelve to be with him.

15 And to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils: 16 And Simon he surnamed Peter; 17 And James the *son* of Zebedee, and John the brother of James; and he surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The sons of thunder:

'Boanerges.' This word is made up of two Hebrew words, signifying sons of thunder, meaning that they, on some accounts, resembled thunder. Note Matt. i. 1. This name was probably given to James and John, on account of something fervid, and glowing, and powerful in their eloquence and character.

18 And Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the *son* of Alphaeus, and Thaddeus, and Simon the Canaanite, 19 And Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed him: and they went into an house: 20 And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread.

'They could not so much as eat bread.' Their time and attention were so occupied, that they were obliged to forego their regular meals. Religion is far more important than the ordinary business of this life; and there is nothing unreasonable if our temporal affairs sometimes give way to the higher interests of our own souls, and the souls of others. At the same time, it is true that religion is ordinarily consistent with a diligent attention to worldly business. It promotes industry, economy, order, neatness, and punctuality—all indispensable to worldly prosperity. Of these excellences our Saviour himself was an illustrious example.

21 And when his friends heard *of it*, they went out to lay hold on him: for they said, He is beside himself.

'When his friends.' His relatives. 'Heard of it.' Heard of his conduct; his preaching; his appointing the apostles; his drawing such a multitude to his preaching. 'They went out to lay hold on him.' To take him away from the multitude, and to remove him to his home, that he might be treated as a maniac, and restored to his right mind. 'They said.' Probably the enemies of Jesus raised the report, and his relatives were persuaded to believe it to be true. 'He is beside himself.' He is delirious or deranged. The charge of derangement on account of attention to religion has not been confined to our Saviour. Let a man be deeply impressed with a sense of his condition and danger, *spend much of his time in prayer, and have no relish for the ordinary amusements or business of life; or, let a christian be much impressed with his obligation to devote himself to God, and act as*



if he believed there was an eternity; or let a minister show uncommon zeal, and waste his strength in the service of his Master, and the world is not slow to call it derangement. As if eternity was of no consequence, and all anxiety about that interminable state were madness. At the same time, men may endanger themselves on the bosom of the deep, or in the bowels of the earth, for wealth; or may plunge into the ways of fashion, and folly, and vice, and neglect the hours of repose, and the social endearments of their family, and the demands of business; and in the view of the world this is wisdom, and proof of a sane mind! Such is the consistency of boasted reason; such the wisdom and prudence of worldly men!

22 ¶ And the scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the prince of the devils casteth he out devils. 23 And he called them *unto him*, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? 24 And if a kingdom be divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. 25 And if a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand. 26 And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end. 27 No man can enter into a strong man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the strong man; and then he will spoil his house. 28 Verily, I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme: 29 But he that shall blaspheme against the Holy Ghost hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: 30 Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.

'And the scribes,' &c. See Matt. xii. 24—32. The occasion of their saying this was, that he had healed a man possessed with a devil. The scribes, who came from Jerusalem to watch his conduct, ascribed it to a compact or agreement between him and the prince of the devils.

31 ¶ There came then his brethren and his mother, and, standing without, sent unto him, calling him. 32 And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee. 33 And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother, or my brethren? 34 And he looked round *about on them* which sat about him, and said, Behold

my mother and my brethren ! 35 For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother, and my sister, and mother.

See notes on Matt. xii. 46—50.

#### CHAPTER IV.

1 AND he began again to teach by the sea-side : and there was gathered unto him a great multitude, so that he entered into a ship, and sat in the sea ; and the whole multitude was by the sea, on the land. 2 And he taught them many things by parables, and said unto them in his doctrine, 3 Hearken ; Behold, there went out a sower to sow : 4 And it came to pass, as he sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up. 5 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth ; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth : 6 But when the sun was up, it was scorched ; and because it had no root, it withered away. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit. 8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprang up, and increased ; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred. 9 And he said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

See the parable of the sower explained, in the notes on Matt. xiii. 1—9.

10 And when he was alone, they that were about him, with the twelve, asked of him the parable. 11 And he said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God : but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in parables : 12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive ; and hearing they may hear, and not understand ; lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

See Matt. xiii. 10—17. ‘When he was alone.’ When he withdrew from the multitude, a few followed him for the purpose of further instruction.

13 And he said unto them, Know ye not this parable ? and how then will ye know all parables ?

'Know ye not this parable?' This which is so plain and obvious. 'How will ye know all parables?' Those which are more difficult and obscure. As they were themselves to be teachers, it was important that they should be acquainted with the whole system of religion: of much more importance for them at that time, than for the mass of the people.

14 ¶ The sower soweth the word. 15 And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts. 16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the word, immediately receive it with gladness; 17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the word's sake, immediately they are offended. 18 And these are they which are sown among thorns; such as hear the word, 19 And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful. 20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the word, and receive it, and bring forth fruit, some thirty fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

See Matt. xiii. 18—23.

21 ¶ And he said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candle-stick?

'Is a candle brought,' &c. Its design is to give light. So Christ's preaching by parables is not designed to obscure the truth, but to throw light on it; and they should understand those parables, and, understanding them, should impart the truth to others also, as a candle throws its beams upon a dark world. 'Bushel.' A measure for grain, containing about twelve quarts. 'Bed.' A couch, to sleep on at night, or to recline on at their meals. Probably the latter is here meant, and is equivalent to our saying, a candle is not brought to be put under the table, but on it. See note, Matt. xxiii. 6.

22 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad.

'There is nothing hid,' &c. See note, Matt. x. 25.

23 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 24 And he saith unto them, Take heed what ye hear: With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear, shall more be given.

'Take heed what ye hear.' Or, consider well what you hear. Make a good improvement of it. 'With what measure ye mete,' &c. You shall be treated according to the use you make of your opportunities of learning. This is a proverbial expression. See it explained on Matt. vii. 1, 2. 'Mete.' Measure. With what measure ye measure. 'Unto you that hear.' To you who are attentive, and who improve what you hear.

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

See note, Matt. xiii. 12. The meaning here seems to be, he that diligently attends to Christ's words, shall increase more and more in the knowledge of the truth. But he that neglects them, and is inattentive, shall become more ignorant; the few things which he had learned he will forget, and his scanty knowledge will be diminished. 'Hath not.' Does not improve what he possessed; or does not make proper use of his means of learning. 'That which he hath.' That which he had already learned. The attention must be continued. It is not sufficient that we have learned some things, or appear to have learned much. All will be in vain, unless we go forward, and improve every opportunity of learning the will of God, and the way of salvation.

26 And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground;

'The kingdom of God.' The gospel, or religion in the soul, may be compared to this. See Matt. iii. 2.

27 And should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

'And should sleep, and rise night and day.' Should sleep in the night, and rise by day; that is, should live in his usual way. By this we are not to infer that men are to use no diligence in the obtaining and growth of piety, but the illustration shows this, and this only, that as we cannot tell how grain grows, so we cannot tell the mode in which piety increases in the heart, Phil. ii. 12. 'He knoweth not how.' This is still true. After all the researches of philosophers, not one has been able to tell the way in which grain grows. They can observe one fact after another; they can see the changes; they can see the necessity of the rain and sun, of care and shelter, but beyond this they cannot go. So



in religion. We can mark the change; we can see the need of prayer, and examination, and searching the scriptures, and the use of the ordinances of religion, but we cannot tell in what way the religious principle is strengthened. See John iii, 8.

28 For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

‘For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself.’ That is, it is done without the power of man. It is done while man is engaged in other things. God gives it its power. It has no power of its own. So religion in the heart is not by the power of man. It grows he cannot tell how; and of course he cannot, without Divine aid, control it. It is by the power of God. At the same time, as without industry man would have no harvest, so without active effort he would have no religion. Both are connected with effort; both increase when the proper means are used; and both depend on God for increase. ‘First the blade.’ The green, tender shoot, or grass, that first starts out of the earth, before the stalk is formed. ‘Then the ear.’ The original means the stalk or spire of wheat or barley, as well as the ear. ‘The full corn.’ The ripe wheat. The grain swollen to its proper size. By this is denoted, undoubtedly, that grace or religion in the heart is of gradual growth. It is at first tender, feeble, perhaps almost imperceptible, like the first shootings of the grain in the earth. Perhaps also, like grain, it often lies long in the earth before there are signs of life. Like the tender grain, also, it needs care, kindness, and culture. A light frost, a cold storm, or a burning sun, alike injure it. So tender piety, in the heart, needs care, kindness, culture; instruction, prayer, and friendly counsel from parents, teachers, ministers, and experienced christians, that it may grow, and bring forth the full fruits of holiness. Like the grain also, in due time, it will grow strong; it will produce its appropriate fruit—a full and rich harvest to the praise of God.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he putteth in the sickle, because the harvest is come.

‘Immediately he putteth in the sickle.’ This is the way with the husbandman. As soon as the grain is ripe, it is cut down. So it is often with the christian. As soon as he is prepared for heaven, he is taken there. But we are not to press this part of the parable, as if it meant that all are removed as soon as they are fit for heaven.

30 ¶ And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

*This shows the great solicitude which Jesus had to adapt his*

instructions to the capacity of his disciples. He sought out the most plain and striking illustrations; an example which should be followed by all the ministers of the gospel and teachers.

31 *It is* like a grain of mustard-seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth: 32 But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

See notes on Matt. xiii. 31, 32.

33 And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear *it*.

'Spake the word.' The word of God. The doctrines of his gospel. 'As they were able to hear it.' As they could comprehend it. They were like children; and he led them by degrees to a full understanding of the plan of salvation.

34 But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

'Without a parable spake he not unto them.' That is, the things pertaining to his kingdom. On other subjects he spake without parables. On these, such was their prejudice, so many notions had they contrary to the nature of his kingdom, and so liable would plain instructions have been to give offence, that he employed this method to insinuate truth gradually into their minds, and to prepare them fully to understand the nature of his kingdom. 'They were alone.' His disciples. 'He expounded.' Explained. Showed them more at length the spiritual meaning of the parables.

35 And the same day, when the even was come, he saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side, 36 And when they had sent away the multitude, they took him even as he was in the ship. And there were also with him other little ships.

See Matt. viii. 18—27. 'Even as he was in the ship.' They took him without making any preparation for the voyage; without providing any food or raiment. He was sitting in a ship, or boat, instructing the people. In the same boat, probably ill fitted to encounter a storm on the lake, they sailed. This would render their danger more imminent, and the miracle more striking. 'There were with him other little ships.' Small vessels or boats belonging probably to the people, who seeing him sail, resolved to follow him.

37 And there arose a great storm of wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full. 38 And he was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake him, and say unto him, Master, carest thou not that we perish? 39 And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith? 41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

'Peace, be still.' None but the God of the storms and the billows could awe, by a word, the troubled elements, and send peace and stillness among the winds and waves. He must, therefore, be Divine.

## CHAPTER V.

1 AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes. 2 And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit, 3 Who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

See this account of the demoniacs fully explained on Matt. viii. 28—34.

4 Because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

'He had been often bound with fetters and chains.' Efforts had been made to confine him, but his strength, increased by his malady, had prevented it.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

'Cutting himself with stones.' These are all marks of a madman: a man bereft of reason, an outcast, strong and dangerous. The inspired penman says that this madness was caused by an unclean spirit, or by his being under the influence of a devil. *That this account is not irrational, see note on Matt. iv. 24.*

6 But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him.

'Worshipped him.' Bowed down before him; rendered him homage. This was an acknowledgment of Christ's power, and his control over fallen spirits.

7 And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, *thou* Son of the Most High God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not. 8 (For he said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean spirit.) 9 And he asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many.

The word 'legion' is a Latin word, applied to a division in the Roman army. The number was about five thousand. We are not to suppose that there were precisely this number engaged in tormenting this man, but that the number was great: so great that it might properly be called a legion.

10 And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country. 11 Now there was there nigh unto the mountains a great herd of swine feeding. 12 And all the devils besought him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them. 13 And forthwith Jesus gave them leave. And the unclean spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea. 14 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. 15 And they come to Jesus, and see him that was possessed with the devil, and had the legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

There could be no doubt of the reality of this miracle. The man had been well known. He had long dwelt among the tombs, an object of terror and alarm. To see him become all at once peaceful, and calm, and rational, proved that it was the power of God only which had done it. 'They were afraid.' They were awed, as in the presence of God; they were struck with astonishment at what Jesus had done.

16 And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the devil, and also concerning the swine. 17 And they began to pray him



to depart out of their coasts. 18 And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him. 19 Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

'Jesus suffered him not.' He desired to restore him to his family. Jesus was unwilling to delay the joy of his friends, and prolong their anxiety, by suffering him to remain away from them.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: And all men did marvel.

'In Decapolis.' See note Matt. iv. 25. 'How great things,' &c. This was the natural expression of right feeling at being cured of such a calamity. So the desire of sinners, freed from sin, is to honour Jesus; to ascribe all to his power; and to invite the world to participate in the same salvation, and to join them in doing honour to the Son of God. Compare Ps. lxvi. 16.

21 And when Jesus was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto him. and he was nigh unto the sea. 22 And behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw him, he fell at his feet.

See the account of the raising of Jairus' daughter, and the healing of the woman with an issue of blood, fully explained in notes on Matt. ix. 18—26.

23 And besought him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

'Lieth at the point of death.' Is dying; in the last agonies.

24 And Jesus went with him: and much people followed him, and thronged him. 25 And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, 26 And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

'Had suffered many things.' Had resorted to many things painful, by the direction of the physicians, in order to be healed.

27 When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

'Came in the press behind.' In the crowd that pressed upon him. This was done to avoid being noticed. It was an act of faith: full confidence that Jesus was able to heal; but trembling, and retiring, on account of her conscious unworthiness, illustrating the humility and confidence of a sinner coming to God for pardon and life.

28 For she said, If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. 29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague. 30 And Jesus immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said, Who touched my clothes?

'Virtue had gone out of him.' Power to heal. The word in the original means power. 'Who touched my clothes?' This he said, not to obtain information, but that the woman might herself confess the whole matter, by which the power of her faith and the greatness of the miracle might be manifested, to the praise of God.

31 And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou, Who touched me? 32 And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. 33 But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. 34 And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

'Daughter.' A word of kindness, tending to inspire confidence, and to dissipate her fears. The merciful Saviour always speaks in kindness to those who are humble, and conscious of their ill desert. 'Be whole.' That is, continue to be whole; for she was already cured. 'Of thy plague.' Thy disease; literally thy scourge. So a word from Jesus heals the moral malady of the sinner.

35 While he yet spake, there came from the ruler of the synagogue's *house certain* which said, Thy daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further? 36 As soon as Jesus heard the word that was spoken, he saith unto the ruler of the synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

'Why troublest thou?' &c. It seems that the people had not yet confidence that Jesus could raise the dead. He had not yet done it; and as the child was now dead, they wished no further

to trouble him. Jesus kindly set the fears of the ruler at rest, and assured him that he had equal power over the dead as the living, and could as easily raise those who had expired as those who were expiring.

37 And he suffered no man to follow him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James. 38 And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

'The tumult.' The confusion and weeping of the assembled people. 'Wailed.' Making inarticulate, mournful sounds, howling for the dead.

39 And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

'This ado.' This tumult, this bustle or confusion. 'And weep.' Weep in this inordinate and improper manner. 'But sleepeth.' See Matt. ix. 24.

40 And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying. 41 And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha-cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

'Talitha-cumi.' This is the language which our Saviour commonly spoke. It is a mixture of Syriac and Chaldee, called Syro-Chaldaic. The translation is given by the evangelist, 'Damsel, arise.'

42 And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was *of the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment. 43 And he charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

'Something should be given her to eat.' He had raised her by extraordinary power, but he willed that she should be sustained by ordinary means. He also in this gave full evidence that she was really restored to life and health. The changes were great, sudden, and certain. There could be no illusion. So when the Saviour had risen, he gave evidence of his own resurrection, by eating with his disciples. John xxi. 1-13.

## CHAPTER VI.

1 AND he went out from thence, and came into his own country; and his disciples follow him. 2 And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing *him* were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *man* these things? and what wisdom *is* this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? 3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. 4 But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. 5 And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*. 6 And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

See this passage explained in the notes on Matt. xiii. 54—58.

7 ¶ And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

‘By two and two.’ In order that they might support and encourage each other in their work. Amidst the trials and opposition which they would meet with, mutual counsel and aid would greatly lighten their burdens, and alleviate their calamities, and lead to united plans, to advance the kingdom of the Redeemer. Jesus here, as in all the work of religion, consulted at the same time the happiness and usefulness of his disciples; nor are they ever separated.

8 And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse: 9 But *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. 10 And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. 11 And *whosoever* shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet, for *a* testimony against them. Verily, I say unto you, It



shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

See these verses fully explained in Matt. x. 9--15. In Matt. x. 5, they were commanded not to go among the Gentiles or Samaritans. Mark omits that direction, perhaps, because as he was writing for the Gentiles, the direction might create unnecessary difficulty or offence. Perhaps, also, because the command was given for a temporary purpose, and was not in force at the time of his writing.

12 And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

'Preached that men should repent.' See the nature of repentance explained, in Matt. iii. 2.

13 And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

'Cast out many devils.' See note on Matt. iv. 24. 'And anointed with oil.' Anointing with oil was in common use among the Jews in cases of sickness. It was supposed to have a mild, soothing, and alleviating effect on the body. In James v. 14, the elders of the church, in connexion with prayers, were directed also to anoint the sick with oil. It was also used in wounds. The good Samaritan poured oil into the wounds of the way-laid Jew, Luke x. 34. It need not be supposed, however, that the apostles used oil for mere medical purposes. It was used probably, like the imposition of hands, or like our Saviour's anointing the eyes of the blind with clay, merely as a sign, in expectation that God would impart that aid and comfort which was sought, and which was represented by the naturally soothing and gentle effect of oil.

14 And king Herod heard *of him*, (for his name was spread abroad :) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him. 15 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. 16 But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded : he is risen from the dead. 17 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife : for he had married her. 18 For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife. 19 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him ; but she could not : 20 For

Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him: and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly. 21 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod, on his birth-day, made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee; 22 And when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the king said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give *it* thee. 23 And he sware unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give *it* thee, unto the half of my kingdom. 24 And she went forth, and said unto her mother, What shall I ask? And she said, the head of John the baptist. 25 And she came in straightway with haste unto the king, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the baptist. 26 And the king was exceeding sorry; *yet* for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her. 27 And immediately the king sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought: and he went and beheaded him in the prison, 28 And brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her mother. 29 And when his disciples heard *of it*, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

See this account of the death of John the Baptist fully explained in Matt. xiv. 1—12.

'He did many things,' But he did not do the thing which was demanded of him—break off from his sins. He attempted to make a compromise with his conscience. Sinners often treat ministers kindly, and do much to make them comfortable, and hear them gladly, while they are still unwilling to do the thing which is demanded of them—repent, and believe the gospel.

30 And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

'And the apostles gathered themselves together.' That is, those whom he had sent out two and two, ver. 7. Having travelled around the country, they returned and met the Saviour at Capernaum.

31 And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves

apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. 32 And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

'A desert place.' A retired place, across the sea from Capernaum, where they would be free from interruption. 'Coming and going.' Coming to be healed, and retiring, or coming to hear him preach. It means that there was a vast multitude attending his preaching. See the miracle of the loaves and fishes explained in Matt. xiv. 13—21. 'By ship.' By a boat, a small vessel. 'Privately.' Without making their plan known. They intended to go privately.

33 And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto him.

'Afoot thither.' On foot to the place where they saw them going. 'Out of all cities.' All cities or large towns in the neighbourhood.

34 And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things.

'Much people.' Many people. 'As sheep,' &c. They had no one to teach them, and guide them. The priests and scribes were proud, corrupt, and despised the common people, and neglected them.

35 And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed:

'The time is far passed.' The day is almost gone. It is drawing near to night.

36 Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. 37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?

'Give ye them to eat.' Give them food to eat. 'Two hundred pennyworth of bread.' About six pounds nine shillings. As the disciples had a common purse in which they carried their little property, consisting of donations of their friends, and money to be given to the poor, (compare John xii. 6. Matt. xxvi. 8, 9.

Luke viii. 3,) it is not improbable that they had, at this time, about this sum in their possession. Philip, for it was he who asked the question, John vi. 7, asked whether they should take all their little property, and spend it on a single meal? And even if we should, said he, it would not be sufficient to satisfy such a multitude. It was implied in this, that in his view they could not provide for them if they wished, and that it would be better rather to send them away than to attempt it.

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. 39 And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. 40 And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

'In ranks.' By square, regularly formed, companies. 'By hundreds and by fifties.' Some companies had a hundred in them, and some fifty. We need not suppose that these were exactly formed, or arranged; but that this was about the number. The expression indicates a multitude. There were so many that they sat down, by hundreds and by fifties, in separate companies, on the green grass.

41 And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. 42 And they did all eat, and were filled. 43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

'Twelve baskets.' Baskets in which they carried their provisions, belonging to the disciples, or, perhaps, to some of the multitude. 'Fragments,' Broken pieces of the bread that remained.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men. 45 And straightway he constrained his disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while he sent away the people. 46 And when he had sent them away, he departed into a mountain to pray. 47 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and he alone on the land. 48 And he saw *them* toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary *unto them*: and about the fourth watch of the night *he cometh unto them*, walking upon the sea, and would



have passed by them. 49 But when they saw him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: 50 For they all saw him, and were troubled. And immediately he talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid. 51 And he went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. 52 For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

See this passage explained in Matt. xiv. 22—36. 'They considered not the miracle of the loaves.' They did not remember or call to mind the power which Jesus had shown in feeding the five thousand by a miracle, and that, having done that, he had power also to save them from the storm. 'Their heart was hardened.' Their mind was dull to perceive it. They did not quickly learn, as they ought to have done, that he had all power, and could therefore allay the storm. The word 'heart' is frequently used in this sense. See Rom. i. 21; ii. 15. 2 Cor. iv. 6.

53 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. 54 And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew him, 55 And ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard he was. 56 And whithersoever he entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought him that they might touch if it were but the border of his garment: and as many as touched him were made whole.

'They knew him.' They recollected him, for he had been there before, and worked miracles. 'The border of his garment.' Compare note on Matt. ix. 20.

## CHAPTER VII.

1 THEN came together unto him the pharisees, and certain of the scribes, which came from Jerusalem.

See this passage explained in the notes on Matt. xv. 1—20.

'Came from Jerusalem.' Probably to observe his conduct, and to find matter of accusation against him.

2 And when they saw some of his disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

'Defiled hands.' The hands were considered defiled, or polluted, unless they were washed previous to every meal.

3 For the pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the elders.

'Except they wash their hands oft.' The word 'oft,' means frequently, often; and here, diligently, accurately, carefully. Unless they wash their hands carefully, or according to rule, &c. 'The tradition.' Not what was delivered by writing in the law of Moses, but what had been communicated from father to son, as being proper and binding. 'The elders.' The ancients, not the old men then living, but those who had lived formerly.

4 And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, and brazen vessels, and of tables.

'Cups.' Drinking vessels. Those used at their meals. 'Pots.' Measures of liquids. Vessels made of wood, used to hold wine, vinegar, &c. 'Brazen vessels.' Vessels made of brass, used in cooking or otherwise. These, if much polluted, were commonly passed through the fire; if slightly polluted, they were washed. Earthen vessels, if defiled, were usually broken. 'Tables.' This word means, in the original, beds or couches. It refers not to the tables on which they ate, but to the couches on which they reclined at their meals. See notes on Matt. xxiii. 6. These were supposed to be defiled when any unclean or polluted person had reclined on them; and they deemed it necessary to purify them with water.

5 Then the pharisees and scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands? 6 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from me. 7 Howbeit, in vain do they worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of men.

'For doctrines.' For commands of God, binding on the conscience. Imposing your traditions as equal in authority to the commands of God.

8 For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups : and many other such like things ye do.

‘Laying aside.’ Rejecting, or making it give place to traditions ; considering the traditions as superior in authority to the divine law. This was the uniform doctrine of the pharisees. See Matt. xv. 1—9.

9 And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. 10 For Moses said, Honour thy father and thy mother ; and, Whoso curseth father or mother, let him die the death : 11 But ye say, If a man shall say to his father or mother, *It is* corban, that is to say, a gift, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me ; *he shall be free.* 12 And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his father or his mother ; 13 Making the word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered : and many such like things do ye.

‘Full well.’ These words are capable of different interpretations. Some read them as a question ; ‘Do ye do well in rejecting?’ &c. Others suppose them to be ironical. ‘From conscientious attachment to your traditions, you have made void the law of God!’ meaning to intimate by it that they had acted wickedly and basely.

14 ¶ And when he had called all the people *unto him*, he said unto them, Hearken unto me every one *of you*, and understand : 15 There is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him : but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. 16 If any man have ears to hear, let him hear. 17 And when he was entered into the house from the people, his disciples asked him concerning the parable.

‘The parable.’ The word ‘parable,’ here, means obscure and difficult saying. They could not understand it. They had probably imbibed many of the popular notions of the pharisees, and they could not understand why a man was not defiled by external things. It was moreover, a doctrine of the law, that men were ceremonially polluted by contact with dead bodies, &c.

18 And he saith unto them, Are ye so without un-

derstanding also? Do ye not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, *it* cannot defile him:

'Cannot defile him.' Cannot render his soul polluted; cannot make him a sinner, so as to need this purifying as a religious observance.

19 Because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats?

'Entereth not into his heart.' Does not reach or affect the mind, the soul, and consequently cannot pollute it. The notions of the pharisees, therefore, are not founded in reason, but are mere superstition. 'Purging all meats.' The word 'purging' here, means to purify, to cleanse. What is thrown out of the body is the innutritious part of the food taken into the stomach, and leaving only that which is proper for the support of life; and it cannot, therefore, defile the soul. 'All meats.' All food; all that is taken into the body to support life. The meaning is, that the economy or process by which life is supported, purifies or renders nutritious all kinds of food. The unwholesome parts are separated, and the wholesome only are taken into the system.

20 And he said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. 21 For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, 22 Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. 23 All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

'That which cometh out of the man.' His words; the expression of his thoughts and feelings; his conduct, as the expression of inward malice, anger, covetousness, lust, &c. 'Defileth the man.' Is really polluted, or offensive in the sight of God. They render the soul corrupt and abominable in the sight of God. See Matt. xv. 18—20.

24 ¶ And from thence he arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know *it*: but he could not be hid.

See this miracle explained in Matt. xv. 21—28. 'Would have no man know it.' To avoid the designs of the pharisees, he wished to be retired.

25 For a certain woman, whose young daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of him, and came and fell at his feet: 26 The woman was a Greek, a Syrophae-



nician by nation ; and she besought him that he would cast forth the devil out of her daughter.

'A Greek.' The Jews called all persons Greeks who were not of their nation. Compare Rom. i. 14. The whole world was considered as divided into Jews and Greeks.

27 But Jesus said unto her, Let the children first be filled : for it is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast *it* unto the dogs. 28 And she answered and said unto him, Yes, Lord : yet the dogs under the table eat of the children's crumbs. 29 And he said unto her, For this saying go thy way ; the devil is gone out of thy daughter. 30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her daughter laid upon the bed. 31 ¶ And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, he came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

'Departing from the coasts.' The country, or regions of Tyre. 'Came unto the sea of Galilee.' The sea of Tiberias. 'Decapolis.' See Matt. iv. 25. He went into the retired regions around the sea of Galilee, to avoid the designs of the pharisees, who sought his life.

32 And they bring unto him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech ; and they beseech him to put his hand upon him.

That is, his friends brought, or the people brought. 'One that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech.' Not entirely dumb, but who spoke indistinctly or with difficulty. 'To put his hand upon him.' That is, to cure him. Blessings were commonly imparted by laying on the hands.

33 And he took him aside from the multitude, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spit, and touched his tongue ;

'And he took him aside from the multitude.' Why this was done we have no means of information. 'And he put his fingers into his ears,' &c. This was intended, probably, as a sign that the power of healing came from Jesus ; to satisfy the man by the touch that he had this power, and that it could come from no other quarter. Our Saviour often used signs in this way to denote his power to heal. See Mark viii. 23. John ix. 6.

34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

'Looking up to heaven.' To lift up the eyes to heaven is an act

of imploring aid from God, and denotes an attitude of prayer, Ps. cxxi. 1, 2. Mark vi. 41. John xi. 41. 'He sighed.' Pitying the sufferings of the man who stood before him. 'Ephphatha.' This word is Syriac, the language which our Lord used in addressing the man, and means 'be opened.'

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

'The string of his tongue was loosed.' The difficulty in his speaking was removed. 'He spake plain.' Distinctly; without difficulty.

36 And he charged them that they should tell no man: but the more he charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

'Tell no man.' Do not noise it abroad. He was not ambitious of being known.

37 And were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: he maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

'Beyond measure.' Exceedingly; very much. 'He hath done all things well.' All things in a remarkable manner.

#### CHAPTER VIII.

1 IN those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat, Jesus called his disciples *unto him*, and saith unto them, 2 I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with me three days, and have nothing to eat: 3 And if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far. 4 And his disciples answered him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness? 5 And he asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven. 6 And he commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and he took the seven loaves, and gave thanks, and brake, and gave to his disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people. 7 And they had a few small fishes: and he blessed, and commanded to set them also *before them*. 8 So they did eat, and were filled: and *they took up* of the broken meat that was left seven

baskets. 9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and he sent them away.

See this passage explained in Matt. xv. 32—39. 'In those days.' While in the wilderness, where he had cured the deaf and dumb man. 'Having nothing to eat.' Having come unprovided, or having consumed what they had brought. 'I have compassion.' I pity their condition. I am disposed to relieve them. 'Four thousand.' Four thousand men, besides women and children. See Matt. xv. 38.

10 ¶ And straightway he entered into a ship with his disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

'Dalmanutha.' In Matt. xv. 39. it is said that he came into the coasts of Magdala. See note on the place.

11 And the pharisees came forth, and began to question with him, seeking of him a sign from heaven, tempting him. 12 And he sighed deeply in his spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? Verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation. 13 And he left them, and entering into the ship again, departed to the other side.

See this passage explained in Matt. xvi. 1—12. 'Sighed deeply in his spirit.' His soul, his heart, was deeply affected at their wickedness and hypocrisy. The word 'spirit,' here, means human soul. 'No sign be given.' That is, no such sign as they asked, no sign from heaven. He said a sign should be given, the same as was furnished by Jonas, Matt. xvi. 4. But this was not what they asked, nor would it be given because they asked it.

14 ¶ Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf. 15 And he charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod. 16 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread. 17 And when Jesus knew *it*, he saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your heart yet hardened? 18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember? 19 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto him, Twelve. 20 And when the seven among four thousand, how many

baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven. 21 And he said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

'Beware of the leaven of the pharisees.' See Matt. xvi. 6. 'Of Herod.' Of the Herodians—of Herod and his followers. Matthew, instead of Herod, has, the sadducees. It is not improbable that he cautioned them against them all. Matthew has recorded his caution to avoid the pharisees and sadducees, and Mark has added, what Matthew had omitted, the caution to beware of the Herodians.

22 ¶ And he cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto him, and besought him to touch him.

'To Bethsaida.' See note on Matt. xi. 21. 'Besought him to touch him.' That is, to heal him: for they believed that his touch would restore his sight.

23 And he took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when he had spit on his eyes, and put his hands upon him, he asked him if he saw ought.

'Led him out of the town.' Jesus chose to perform the miracle alone; thus showing, that while he did good he desired to do it in such a way as to avoid ostentation. 'Spit on his eyes.' The eyes were probably closed. To apply spittle to them, to wet them, would be a sign, a natural expression of removing the obstruction and opening them. The power was not in the spittle, but it attended the application of it. 'Saw ought.' Saw any thing.

24 And he looked up, and said, I see men, as trees, walking.

'I see men, as trees, walking.' I see men walking, but see them so indistinctly, that but for their motion I could not distinguish them from trees. I cannot distinctly see their shapes and features.

25 After that he put *his* hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

'Every man clearly.' Could see their form and features. His sight was completely restored. Though our Lord did not by this, probably, intend to teach any lesson in regard to the way in which the mind of a sinner is enlightened, yet it affords a striking illustration of it. Sinners are by nature blind, 2 Cor. iv. 4. 1 John ii. 11. John ix. 39. The effect of religion, or of the influence of the Holy Spirit, is to open the eyes, to show the sinner



his condition and his danger. But he does not at once learn to distinguish objects. When converted he is in a new world. Yet he sees at first indistinctly. It is only by repeated applications to the source of light that he sees all things clearly. At first religion may appear full of mysteries. Doctrines and facts appear on every hand that he cannot fully comprehend. Yet let him not despair. Light, in due time, will be shed on obscure and mysterious truths. Faithful and repeated application to the Father of lights in prayer, in searching the scriptures, and in the ordinances of religion, will dissipate all these doubts, and he will see all things clearly.

26 And he sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell *it* to any in the town.

‘The town.’ The town of Bethsaida. ‘Nor tell it,’ &c. Lest it excite the jealousy of the pharisees, and produce commotion and danger.

27 ¶ And Jesus went out, and his disciples, into the towns of Cesarea Philippi: and by the way he asked his disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am? 28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some *say*, Elias; and others, One of the prophets. 29 And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ. 30 And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

See this passage illustrated in Matt. xvi. 13—28.

31 And he began to teach them, that the Son of man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the elders, and of the chief priests, and scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 And he spake that saying openly. And Peter took him, and began to rebuke him. 33 But when he had turned about and looked on his disciples, he rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

‘He spake that saying openly.’ Without parables or figures; so that there could be no possibility of misunderstanding him.

34 ¶ And when he had called the people *unto him with his disciples* also, he said unto them, Whosoever

will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. 35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for my sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it. 36 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? 37 Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? 38 Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed, when he cometh in the glory of his Father with the holy angels.

'Ashamed of me.' Ashamed to own attachment to me on account of my lowly appearance, and my poverty, contempt, and sufferings. 'And of my words.' My doctrines, my instructions. 'This adulterous and sinful generation.' This age given to wickedness, particularly to adultery. 'In the glory of his Father.' In the day of judgment. See notes on Matt. xxvi. 64. The meaning of this verse is, Whosoever shall refuse, through pride or wickedness, to acknowledge and serve Christ here, shall be excluded from his kingdom hereafter. They that would not acknowledge him here must be rejected by him there; they that would not serve him always, will never enjoy him; they that would cast him out and despise him, must be cast out by him, and consigned to eternal, hopeless sorrows.

#### CHAPTER IX.

1 AND he said unto them, Verily I say unto you That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the kingdom of God come with power.

'Verily I say,' &c. See notes on Matt. xvi. 28. This verse properly belongs to the preceding chapter, and the preceding discourse.

2 ¶ And after six days Jesus taketh *with him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves: and he was transfigured before them.

'And after six days,' &c. See this passage explained on Matt. xvii. 1—9.

3 And his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

‘No fuller.’ Rather, no scourer. The office of the person here mentioned was, to scour or whiten cloth; not to full it, or to render it thicker.

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with Jesus. 5 And Peter answered and said to Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias. 6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid. 7 And there was a cloud that overshadowed them: and a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my beloved Son: hear him. 8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save Jesus only with themselves. 9 And as they came down from the mountain, he charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of man were risen from the dead. 10 And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

‘He wist not.’ He knew not. He was desirous of saying something, and he knew not what would be proper.

11 ¶ And they asked him, saying, Why say the scribes that Elias must first come? 12 And he answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first, and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of man, that he must suffer many things, and be set at nought. 13 But I say unto you, That Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

‘Why say the scribes.’ &c. See notes on Matt. xvii. 10—13.

14 ¶ And when he came to *his* disciples, he saw a great multitude about them, and the scribes questioning with them.

See this passage explained in the notes on Matt. xvii. 14—21.

‘Questioning with them.’ Debating with the disciples, and attempting to confound them. In Christ’s absence they had taken occasion to attempt to perplex and confound his followers.

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld him, were greatly amazed, and running to *him* saluted him.

‘Were greatly amazed.’ Were astonished, surprised at his

sudden appearance among them, 'Saluted him.' Received him with joy, with the customary marks of affection and respect.

16 And he asked the scribes, What question ye with them?

'What question ye?' What is the subject of your inquiry or debate with the disciples?

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

'A dumb spirit.' A spirit which deprived his son of the power of speaking.

18 And wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him: and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away: and I spake to thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

'He teareth him.' He rends, distracts, or throws him into convulsions. 'He foameth.' At the mouth. Among us these would all be considered as marks of violent derangement or madness. 'And pineth away.' Becomes thin, haggard, and emaciated. This was the effect of the violence of his struggles, and perhaps of the want of food.

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? Bring him unto me. 20 And they brought him unto him: and when he saw him, straightway the spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming. 21 And he asked his father, How long is it ago since this came unto him? And he said, Of a child. 22 And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

'If thou canst do any thing.' I have brought him to thy disciples, and they could not help him. If thou canst do any thing, have compassion, &c.

23 Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth.

'If thou canst believe.' This was an answer to the request. I can help him. If thou canst believe, it shall be done. Jesus here demanded faith or confidence in himself, in his power of healing. So he demands faith of every sinner that comes to him; and none that come without confidence in him can obtain



the blessing. 'All things are possible to him that believeth.' All things can be effected or accomplished in favour of him that believes; and if thou canst believe, this will be done. God will do nothing in our favour without faith.

24 And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. 25 When Jesus saw that the people came running together, he rebuked the foul spirit, saying unto him, *Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.* 26 And *the spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead. 27 But Jesus took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose. 28 And when he was come into the house, his disciples asked him privately, Why could not we cast him out? 29 And he said unto them, This kind can come forth by nothing, but by prayer and fasting.

'Said with tears.' The man felt the implied rebuke in the Saviour's language. Nothing can be more touching or natural than this. Distressed at the condition of his son, having applied to the disciples in vain, now coming to the Saviour, and not having full confidence that he had any proper qualification to be aided, he wept. Any man would have wept in his condition, nor would the Saviour turn the weeping suppliant away. 'I believe,' I have faith. I do put confidence in thee; though I am conscious that my faith is not as strong as it should be. 'Lord,' This word here, signifies master, or sir, as it does often in the New Testament. 'Help thou my unbelief.' Supply thou the defects of my faith. Give me strength and grace to put entire confidence in thee. Every one who comes to the Saviour for help has need of offering this prayer.

30 ¶ And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and he would not that any man should know *it*. 31 For he taught his disciples, and said unto them, The Son of man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill him; and after that he is killed, he shall rise the third day. 32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask him.

See Matt. xvii. 22, 23. 'Is delivered.' Is given to men to make an atonement by his sufferings and death, and will in *due time* be taken and killed.

33 ¶ And he came to Capernaum: and being in the house he asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? 34 But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest. 35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all. 36 And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said unto them, 37 Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me.

See notes on Matt. xviii. 1—5.

38 ¶ And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us.

‘We saw one,’ &c. There is no improbability in supposing that this might have been one of the disciples of John, or one of the seventy whom Jesus had sent out, and who, though he did not personally attend on Jesus, yet had the power of working miracles.

39 But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. 40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

‘Forbid him not.’ Do not prevent his doing good. If he can work a miracle in my name, it is sufficient proof of attachment to me, and he should not be prevented. ‘Can lightly speak evil of me.’ The word here rendered ‘lightly’ means quickly, or immediately. The meaning of the passage is, that he to whom God gave the power of working a miracle, by that gave evidence that he could not soon be found among the enemies of Jesus. He ought not, therefore, to be prevented in it. Wherever he might be, or whatever his work, yet, if he did it in the name of Jesus, and with the approbation of God, it was evidence sufficient that he was right. Christians should rejoice in good done by their brethren of any denomination. There are men calling themselves christians, who seem to look with doubt and suspicion on all that is done by those who do not walk with them. They undervalue *their labours*, attempt to lessen the evidences of their success, and to diminish their influence. True likeness to the Saviour would lead us to rejoice in all the good accomplished, by whomsoever it might be done. Compare Phil. i. 18.

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

‘Whosoever shall give you a cup,’ &c. But it must be in his name—that is, because he is a christian, because he is attached to the Lord Jesus, and therefore out of love to the Saviour. This is very different from giving it from a mere motive of common kindness. If done from love to Christ, it will be rewarded; and hence we learn that the humblest acts of christians, the lowest service that is rendered, will be graciously noticed by Jesus. None so poor or humble in his kingdom as not to be able to do good and show attachment to him. Their feeblest service will be accepted; and acts of love, that may be forgotten by man, will be remembered by him, and rewarded in heaven.

42 And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea. 43 And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 44 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 45 And if thy foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into life, than having two feet to be cast into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: 46 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. 47 And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the kingdom of God with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire: 48 Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

See Matt. xviii. 7—9. ‘Millstone.’ See Matt. xviii. 6. ‘Their worm.’ This figure is clearly taken from Isa. lxvi. 24. In describing the great prosperity of the kingdom of the Messiah, Isaiah says that the people of God shall go forth, and look upon the carcases of men who have transgressed against God. Their enemies shall be overcome. The people of God shall triumph. The figure is taken from heaps of the dead slain in battle; and the prophet says that the number shall be so great that their worm—the worm feeding on the dead—shall not die, shall live long, as long as there are carcases to be devoured; and that the fire which was used to burn the bodies of the dead shall continue long to burn, shall not be extinguished till they are consumed. The figure, therefore, denotes great misery, and certain

and terrible destruction. In these verses it is applied to the state beyond the grave, and is intended to denote that the destruction of the wicked will be awful, wide-spread, and eternal.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

‘Every one shall be salted with fire.’ As salt is sprinkled on the victim preparatory to its being devoted to God, see Lev. ii, 13.) so should the apostles, by trials, calamities, &c. represented here by fire, be prepared as a sacrifice and offering to God. The chief object of the passage was to teach them that every thing which would endanger their salvation should be sacrificed; that they should deny themselves of all indulgences, and practise all self-denials, in order to obtain eternal life. In this way they would be preserved to eternal life. The word ‘fire,’ here, therefore, denotes self-denials, sacrifices, trials in keeping ourselves from the gratification of the flesh. As if he had said: Look at a sacrifice on the altar. It is an offering to God, about to be presented to him. It is sprinkled with salt, emblematic of purity, of preservation, and of fitting it, therefore, for a sacrifice. So you are devoted to God. You are sacrifices, victims, offerings to him in his service. To make you acceptable offerings, every thing must be done to preserve you from sin, to purify you, and to make you fit offerings. Self-denials, subduing the lusts, enduring trials, removing offences, are the proper preservatives in the service of God. Doing this, you will be acceptable offerings, and be saved: without this, you will be unfit for God’s eternal service, and will be lost.

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

‘Lost his saltness,’ &c. See note, Matt. v. 13. ‘Have salt in yourselves.’ Have the preserving purifying principle always; the principles of denying yourselves, of suppressing pride, ambition, contention, &c., and thus you will be an acceptable offering to God. ‘Have peace.’ Avoid contention and quarrelling, struggling for places, honours, and office, and seek each other’s welfare, and religion will be honoured and preserved in the world.

## CHAPTER X.

1 AND he arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judea by the further side of Jordan: and the people resort unto him again; and, as he was wont, he taught them again. 2 ¶ And the pharisees came



to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting him. 3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. 5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. 10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same *matter*. 11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. 12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

See this question about divorce explained on Matt. xix. 1—12.

‘And if a woman shall put away her husband.’ It would seem from this, that a woman, among the Jews, had the power of separating herself from her husband; yet this right is not given her by the law of Moses. And though instances of this kind might have been attempted to be defended by the example of pagans, yet our Saviour was desirous of showing them that it did not free them from the charge of adultery. The apostles were going forth to teach pagan nations, and it was proper for Christ to teach them how to act in such cases, and to show them that they were cases of real adultery.

13 ¶ And they brought young children to him, that he should touch them: and *his* disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

See notes on Matthew xix. 13—15.

‘Should touch them.’ That is, should lay his hands on them, and pray for them, and bless them. Compare Matthew xix. 13. It was common to lay the hands on the head of a person for whom a blessing was asked. See the case of Jacob, Gen. xlviii. 14.

14 But when Jesus saw *it*, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not: for of such is the *kingdom of God*.

'Saw it.' Saw the conduct of his disciples. 'Was much displeased.' Because it was a pleasure to him to receive and bless little children; and they were interfering in a case where it was evidently improper.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein.

'Whosoever shall not receive.' Whosoever shall not manifest the spirit of a little child. 'The kingdom of God.' The gospel. The new dispensation by the Messiah, or the reign of God through a Mediator. See Matt. iii. 2. 'As a little child.' With the temper and spirit of a child, teachable, mild, humble, and free from prejudice and obstinacy. 'Shall not enter therein.' Shall not be a christian; shall not be a real member of the family of Christ on earth, though he may be a professor; and shall never enter heaven.

16 And he took them up in his arms, put *his* hands upon them, and blessed them.

'Blessed them.' Prayed for them, or gave them the assurance of his favour as the Messiah.

How happy would it be if all parents felt it to be their privilege to present their children to Christ! Our children are given to us but for a little time. They are in a world of danger, sin, and woe. They are exposed to temptation on every hand. If God be not their friend, they have no friend that can aid them in the day of adversity, or keep them from the snares of the destroyer. If he is their friend, they have nothing to fear. The proper expression, then, of parental feeling, is to come and offer them early to God. A parent should earnestly seek God's favour as the best inheritance of his children; it is all that he should ask.

So, children who have been the daily objects of a father's prayers and a mother's tears, should never forget that their parents sought the favour of God as the chief blessing; and having been offered to Jesus by prayer in their first days on earth, they should make it their great aim to be prepared to meet him when he shall come in the clouds of heaven.

17 ¶ And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? 18 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? *There is none good but one, that is, God.*

See this passage illustrated in Matt. xix. 16—30.

'Gone forth.' From the place where he had been teaching. 'Running.' Thus showing the intensity with which he desired

to know the way of life. Zeal to know the way to be saved is proper, nor can it ever be too intense if well directed. Nothing else is so important, and nothing demands, therefore, so much effort and haste.

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother. 20 And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth.

‘Defraud not.’ To cheat or defraud supposes a covetous desire of a neighbour’s property, and is attended with falsehood or false witness against a neighbour in obtaining it. It is thus a violation of the ninth and tenth commandments; and our Saviour, therefore, condensed the two, and expressed their substance in this—not to defraud. It is besides, expressly forbidden in Lev. xix. 13. ‘Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour.’

21 Then Jesus beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. 22 And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

‘Jesus—loved him.’ This expression denotes, simply, natural affection, or means that Jesus was pleased with his amiableness, his morality, and his external regard for the law of God. At the same time, this was entirely consistent with deep sorrow that he would not give his heart to God; and with deep abhorrence of such a love of the world as to blind the mind to the beauty of true religion. ‘One thing thou lackest.’ When the young man came to Jesus, he asked him, What lack I yet? Matt. xix. 20. This question Mark has omitted, but he has retained the answer. The answer means, there is one thing yet wanting. See whether you love God more than you do your wealth. By doing that you will show that your love of God is supreme; that your obedience is not merely external and formal, but sincere and real; the thing, now lacking, will be made up.

23 ¶ And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! 24 And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through

the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

'Children.' An expression of affection, perhaps also implying a reproof that their slowness of understanding was like children. 'How hard.' With how much difficulty.

26 And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? 27 And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.

'Out of measure.' Very much, or exceedingly.

28 ¶ Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. 29 And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, 30 But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. 31 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

'An hundredfold.' A hundred times as much. 'In this time.' In this life. In the time that he forsakes all. 'Houses,' &c. This means that the loss shall be a hundred times compensated or made up; or that, in the possession of religion, we have a hundred times the value of all that we forsake. This consists in the pardon of sin, in the favour of God, in peace of conscience, in support in trials and in death, and in raising up friends in the place of those who are left—spiritual brethren, and sisters, and mothers, &c. At the same time it is true that the favour of God is the security for every blessing. Obedience to his law secures industry, temperance, chastity, economy, prudence, health, and the confidence of others, all indispensable to success in life, and all connected, commonly, with success. Though the wicked sometimes prosper, yet the surest way to prosperity is to fear God and keep his commandments. Thus will all needed blessings descend on us here, and eternal blessings hereafter. 'With persecutions.' Jesus did not conceal this. But he consoled them. He assured them that amidst these they should find friends and comfort. It is easy to bear trials if God be our friend. With the promises of the bible in our hand, we may hail persecutions, and thank God that, amidst so many sorrows, he has furnished such superabundant consolations.



32 ¶ And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and Jesus went before them. and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid. And he took again the twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto him, 33 *Saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be delivered unto the chief priests, and unto the scribes; and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles: 34 And they shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him: and the third day he shall rise again.

See Matt. xx. 17—19. 'Jesus went before them.' In the manner of an intrepid, fearless leader and guide, exposing himself to danger and death rather than his followers. 'And they were amazed,' &c. They were afraid that evil would befall him in the city; that the scribes and pharisees, who had so often sought to kill him, would then do it. Their fear and amazement were increased when he told them what would befall him there. They were amazed that he should still persevere in going up to the city.

35 ¶ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, come unto him, saying, Master, we would that thou shouldst do for us whatsoever we shall desire. 36 And he said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? 37 They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory. 38 But Jesus said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? 39 And they say unto him, We can. And Jesus said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the cup that I drink of; and with the baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized: 40 But to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared. 41 And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John. 42 But Jesus called them *to him*, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the *Gentiles exercise lordship over them*; and their great

ones exercise authority upon them. 43 But so shall it not be among you : but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: 44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all. 45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

See notes on Matt. xx. 20—28. 'And James and John—came unto him.' They did this through the instrumentality of their mother. They did not come in person, but they got their mother to make the request for them. Compare Matthew.

46 ¶ And they came to Jericho : and as he went out of Jericho with his disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus, sat by the highway-side begging.

See this passage explained in notes on Matt. xx. 29—34. 'Blind Bartimeus.' Matthew says there were two. Mark mentions but one, though he does not say that there was no other. He mentions this man because he was well known. Bartimeus, the blind man.

47 And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, Jesus, *thou* son of David, have mercy on me. 48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* son of David, have mercy on me. 49 And Jesus stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise ; he calleth thee. 50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to Jesus.

'Casting away his garment.' That is, his outer garment; the one that was thrown loosely over him. See Matt. v. 40. He threw it off, full of joy at the prospect of being healed, and that he might run without impediment to Jesus. This may be used to illustrate the manner in which a sinner should come to Jesus. He must throw away the garments of his own righteousness—he must rise speedily—must run with joy—must have full faith in the power of Jesus, and cast himself entirely upon his mercy.

51 And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee ? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight. 52 And Jesus said unto him, Go thy way ; thy faith hath made thee whole. And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.

## CHAPTER XI.

1 AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount of Olives, he sendeth forth two of his disciples, 2 And saith unto them, Go your way into the village over against you: and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*. 3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the Lord hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither. 4 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door without, in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. 5 And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? 6 And they said unto them even as Jesus had commanded: and they let them go. 7 And they brought the colt to Jesus, and cast their garments on him; and he sat upon him. 8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strawed *them* in the way. 9 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna; Blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the Lord: 10 Blessed *be* the kingdom of our father David, that cometh in the name of the Lord: Hosanna in the highest.

See this passage illustrated in Matt. xxi. 1—11. 'Bethphage and Bethany.' Two villages, about two miles east from Jerusalem, at the foot of the mount of Olives. They came first to Bethphage, and he sent his disciples over into Bethany, a village near at hand. Compare Matthew. 'The Lord.' The word means, here, the Master. The word rendered Lord often means master, as opposed to servants or dependents. See Matt. vi. 24; x. 24. Eph. vi. 5. 'Two ways met.' Cross roads. A public place, probably near the centre of the village. 'What do ye, loosing the colt?' Or, why do ye do this? What authority have you for doing it?

11 And Jesus entered into Jerusalem, and into the temple: and when he had looked round about upon all things, and now the even-tide was come, he went out unto Bethany with the twelve.

'Into the temple.' Not into the edifice properly called the temple, but into the courts which surrounded the principal edifice. Our Saviour, not being of the tribe of Levi, was not permitted to enter into the holy or most holy place. See Matt. xxi. 12. 'And when he had looked round about upon all.' Having seen or examined every thing. He saw the abominations and abuses which he afterwards corrected. 'The even-tide,' The evening; the time after three o'clock, P. M. The religious services of the temple closed with the offering of the evening sacrifice, at three o'clock, P. M., and Jesus probably soon left the city.

12 ¶ And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, he was hungry: 13 And seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, he came, if haply he might find any thing thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

See this passage explained in notes on Matt. xxi. 18—22. 'Afar off.' So far as to see that it was covered with leaves, but not to determine whether there was fruit. 'If haply.' If perhaps. It implies an expectation, that there might be, and yet an uncertainty from some cause. It may be remarked that the word 'haply' does not imply that there was any doubt in the mind of Jesus, but is an expression of the evangelist, speaking, as was natural to him, in the circumstances of the case. 'The time of figs was not yet.' The time of gathering figs was not yet. This is thought to be the true meaning of the passage. If the time for figs to be ripe was not yet, it would seem to be unnatural to expect any. But if the time for them to be ripe was come, yet the time of gathering them was not passed, they might expect to find some on the tree.

14 And Jesus answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And his disciples heard it.

'No man eat fruit of thee.' This implied that it would bear no more. It was to be withered away, and immediately its decay commenced. Jesus was willing by a miracle to teach his disciples his power, and a lesson respecting the state of the Jews—or that God had come often to the Jewish people for the fruits of holiness, and had found none; that he had himself come up to Jerusalem, and had the preceding day entered the temple, if haply he might find the fruits of righteousness, and had found none; that on account of the barrenness of the Jewish institutions, they were to come to an end; the hand of death was to be laid on the whole temple-service, and it was about to pass away for ever. As the barren fig-tree was now to be dried up and die, so Jerusalem was to be abandoned and ruined.



15 ¶ And they come to Jerusalem : and Jesus went into the temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves ; 16 And would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the temple.

See Matt. xxi. 12—15. 'Any vessel.' Any vessel used in cooking, or connected with the sale of their articles of merchandise.

17 And he taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, My house shall be called of all nations the house of prayer ? but ye have made it a den of thieves. 18 And the scribes and chief priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy him : for they feared him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. 19 And when even was come, he went out of the city.

'All the people was astonished.' He became popular among them. The pharisees saw that their authority was lessened or destroyed. They were therefore envious of him, and sought his life. 'His doctrine.' His teaching. He taught with power and authority so great that the multitudes were awed, and were constrained to obey.

20 ¶ And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots. 21 And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which thou cursedst is withered away.

'Thou cursedst.' To curse means to devote to destruction. This is its meaning here.

22 And Jesus answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. 23 For verily I say unto you, That whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea ; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass ; he shall have whatsoever he saith. 24 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*.

'Have faith in God.' Literally, Have the faith of God. This may mean, have strong faith, or have confidence in God ; a strong

belief that he is able to accomplish things that appear most difficult with infinite ease.

25 And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. 26 But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses.

'And when ye stand praying.' When ye pray. It seems that the posture in prayer was sometimes standing, and sometimes kneeling. Compare Psa. xcv. 6. 2 Chron. vi. 13. Dan. vi. 10. Luke xxii. 41. Acts vii. 60; ix. 40. We should be careful that anxiety about a mere form do not exclude anxiety about a far more important matter, the state of the soul. 'Forgive,' &c. See note on Matt. vi. 12, 15.

27 ¶ And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders, 28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things? 29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. 30 The baptism of John, was *it* from heaven, or of men? answer me. 31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did ye not believe him? 32 But if we shall say, Of men; they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. 33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

See notes on Matt. xxi. 23—27.

## CHAPTER XII.

1 AND he began to speak unto them by parables. A *certain* man planted a vineyard, and set an hedge about *it*, and digged a *place* for the wine-fat, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a *far* country. 2 And at the season he sent to the husbandmen a servant, that he might receive from the hus-

bandmen of the fruit of the vineyard. 3 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty. 4 And again he sent unto them another servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled. 5 And again he sent another; and him they killed, and many others; beating some, and killing some. 6 Having yet therefore one son, his well-beloved, he sent him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence my son. 7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and the inheritance shall be ours. 8 And they took him and killed *him*, and cast *him* out of the vineyard. 9 What shall therefore the lord of the vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the vineyard unto others. 10 And have ye not read this scripture; The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: 11 This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? 12 And they sought to lay hold on him, but feared the people: for they knew that he had spoken the parable against them: and they left him, and went their way.

See this parable explained in Matt. xxi. 33—46.

13 ¶ And they send unto him certain of the pharisees and of the herodians, to catch him in *his* words. 14 And when they were come, they say unto him, Master, we know that thou art true, and carest for no man: for thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of God in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cesar, or not? 15 Shall we give, or shall we not give? But he, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye me? bring me a penny, that I may see *it*. 16 And they brought *it*. And he saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? And they said unto him, Cesar's. 17 And Jesus answering, said unto them, Render to Cesar the things that are Cesar's, and to God the things that are God's. And they marvelled at him.

See Matt. xxii. 15—22.

18 ¶ Then come unto him the sadducees, which say there is no resurrection; and they asked him, saying, 19 Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave *his* wife *behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 20 Now there were seven brethren and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. 21 And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. 22 And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. 23 In the resurrection, therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for the seven had her to wife. 24 And Jesus answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the scriptures, neither the power of God? 25 For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven. 26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, *I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?* 27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

See this passage fully explained in Matt. xxii. 23—33.

'Are as the angels.' That is, as the angels in respect to connexions and relations. This passage teaches that the peculiar relation of marriage will not exist. It does not affirm, however, that there will be no recognition of each other as having existed in this near and dear relation. 'How in the bush.' At the burning bush. See Exodus iii. 6. In that part of the book of Exodus which contains the account of the burning bush. When there were no chapters and verses, this was the easiest way of quoting a book of the Old Testament, by the subject, and in this way it was often done by the Jews.

28 ¶ And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all?

See Matt. xxii. 34—40. 'Perceiving that he had answered them well.' That is, with wisdom, and with a proper understanding of the law. This question seems to have been one of the very



few candid inquiries made of him, for the purpose of obtaining information. Jesus answered it in the spirit of kindness, and commended the conduct of the man.

29 And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord :

'Hear, O Israel.' This was said to call the attention of the Jews to the great importance of the truth about to be proclaimed. See Deut. vi. 4, 5. 'The Lord our God,' &c. Literally, Jehovah, our God, is one Jehovah. The other nations worshipped many gods, but the God of the Jews was one, and one only. Jehovah was undivided; and this great truth it was the design of the separation of the Jewish people from other nations to keep in mind. This was the peculiar truth which was communicated to the Jews, and this they were required to keep and remember for ever.

30 And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength : this *is* the first commandment. 31 And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

'And thou shalt love,' &c. If Jehovah was the only God, then they ought not to love any other being supremely. Then they might not bow down before any idol. They were required to love God above all other beings or things, and with all the faculties of their minds.

32 And the scribe said unto him, Well, Master, thou hast said the truth : for there is one God ; and there is none other but he : 33 And to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices. 34 And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God. And no man after that durst ask him *any question*.

This answer of the scribe is not found in Matthew. 'Is more than all.' Is of more importance and value. 'Discreetly.' Wisely, according to truth. 'Not far from the kingdom of God.' This shows that a proper understanding of the Old Testament, of its laws and requirements, would lead a man to christianity, would

prepare his mind for it, and fit him at once to embrace it when presented. One system is grafted on the other, agreeably to Gal. iii. 24. 'No man—durst ask him any question.' That is, no one of the scribes, the pharisees, or the sadducees, durst ask him a question for the purpose of tempting him, or entangling him. He had completely silenced them.

35 ¶ And Jesus answered and said, while he taught in the temple, How say the scribes that Christ is the son of David? 36 For David himself said by the Holy Ghost, The Lord said to my Lord, Sit thou on my right hand, till I make thine enemies thy footstool. 37 David therefore himself calleth him Lord; and whence is he *then* his son? And the common people heard him gladly.

See Matt. xxii. 41—46. 'The common people heard him gladly.' The rich and the mighty were too proud to listen to his instructions. So it is still. This is not the fault of the gospel. It would bless the rich and the mighty as well as the poor, if they came with like humble hearts. God knows no distinctions of men in conferring his favours; and wherever there is a poor, contrite, and humble spirit, clothed in rags or in purple, on a throne or a dunghill, there he confers the blessings of salvation.

38 ¶ And he said unto them in his doctrine, Beware of the scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the market-places, 39 And the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts:

'In his doctrine.' In his teaching, for so it should be rendered. 'Beware of the scribes.' Be on your guard. Be cautious about hearing them or following them. 'Which love to go in long clothing.' In long flowing robes, as significant of their consequence, leisure, and learning. 'Salutations,' &c. See Matt. xxiii. 6, 7.

40 Which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

'Which devour widows' houses.' Which devour the families of widows, or the means of supporting their families. This they did under pretence of aiding them, and counselling them in the knowledge of the law, and in the management of their estates. They took advantage of their ignorance and unprotected state, and extorted large sums from them. No wonder that our Saviour denounced them so sharply! If there is any sin of peculiar enormity, it is thus taking advantage of the circumstances of

the needy and the helpless, and wronging them out of the pittance on which they have to support their families. 'For a pretence.' For show, or pretending great devotion.

41 ¶ And Jesus sat over against the treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the treasury : and many that were rich cast in much.

'The treasury.' This was in the court of the women. See Matt. xxi. 12. In that court there were fixed a number of chests or coffers, made with a large open mouth, in the shape of a trumpet, for the purpose of receiving the offerings of the people.

42 And there came a certain poor widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing.

'Two mites.' The word translated 'mite' denotes a small coin made of brass, the smallest in use among the Jews. It was in value about three fourths of an English farthing.

43 And he called *unto him* his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in than all they which have cast into the treasury :

'This poor widow hath cast more in,' &c. That is, more in proportion to her means, and therefore more that was acceptable to God, as it showed more love to the sacred cause, more self-denial, and of course more sincerity in what she did. This is the rule by which God will reward us. Compare 2 Cor. viii. 12.

44 For all *they* did cast in of their abundance ; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

'Of their abundance.' Of their superfluous store. They have given what they did not need ; and in doing it they have shown no self-denial. 'She, of her want.' Of her poverty. 'All her living.' All that she had to live on. She trusted in God to supply her wants, and devoted her little property entirely to him.

Very few practise self-denial for charity. Most give of their abundance, that is, what they can spare without feeling it. Among all the thousands who give to these objects, how few deny themselves of one comfort, even the least, that they may advance the kingdom of Christ !

## CHAPTER XIII.

1 AND as he went out of the temple, one of his disciples saith unto him, Master, see what manner of stones, and what buildings are here ! 2 And Jesus answering

said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

The principal things in this chapter are fully explained in notes on the xxivth chapter of Matthew.

'What manner of stones.' The stones here referred to were those used in the building of the temple, and the walls on the sides of Mount Moriah on which the temple stood. The temple was constructed of white marble, and the blocks were of a prodigious size. Josephus says that these stones were some of them fifty feet long, twenty-four broad, and sixteen in thickness. 'What buildings.' The buildings connected with the temple, the main building, and the courts, and porches that surrounded it.

3 And as he sat upon the mount of Olives over against the temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked him privately, 4 Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled? 5 And Jesus answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you: 6 For many shall come in my name, saying, I am *Christ*; and shall deceive many. 7 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall not be* yet. 8 For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

'Upon the mount of Olives, over against the temple.' The mount of Olives was directly east of Jerusalem, and from it there was a fine view of the temple.

9 ¶ But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before rulers and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them. 10 And the gospel must first be published among all nations.

'Take heed to yourselves.' Take care of your lives, not to run into unnecessary danger. 'To councils.' The higher ecclesiastical courts of the Jews, including the sanhedrim, or great council of the nation. 'Rulers and kings.' Referring to Roman officers. 'For a testimony against them.' Rather to bear



testimony to them ; or to be witnesses before them of the truth, because they were attached to him. See Acts iv. vi. vii. xxiii. xxiv. 24, 25.

11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate : but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye : for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.

'Neither do ye premeditate.' Do not think beforehand, or prepare an answer. You know not what the accusations will be ; and God will furnish you with a reply that shall be adapted to the occasion. 'Not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost.' This is a full promise that they should be inspired, and consequently their defences recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, are the words of the Holy Ghost. There could be no more explicit promise that they should be under an infallible guidance ; and we are not left to doubt that they were taught of God. He gave them power, and they spake with a wisdom, fearlessness, pungency, and ability, which no other men have ever manifested—full proof that these illiterate fishermen were under the influence of the Holy Ghost.

12 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son ; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. 13 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake : but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved. 14 ¶ But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not (let him that readeth understand) then let them that be in Judea flee to the mountains : 15 And let him that is on the house-top not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house : 16 And let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment. 17 But wo to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days ! 18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter. 19 For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be. 20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved : but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened the days. 21

And then if any man shall say to you, *Lo, here is Christ*; or, *lo, he is there*; believe *him* not: 22 For false Christs and false prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect. 23 But take ye heed: behold, I have foretold you all things. 24 ¶ But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, 25 And the stars of heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in heaven shall be shaken. 26 And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then shall he send his angels, and shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth to the uttermost part of heaven. 28 Now learn a parable of the fig-tree; When her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near: 29 So ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors. 30 Verily I say unto you, That this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. 31 Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away.

'The brother shall betray,' &c. The brother shall give up in a treacherous manner his brother to be put to death, on account of his attachment to Jesus. Through fear, in the hope of reward and the hatred of the gospel, he will overcome all the natural ties of brotherhood, and give up his own kindred to be burnt or crucified. Perhaps nothing could more clearly show the dreadful evil of those times, as well as the natural opposition of the heart to the religion of Christ. 'On the house-top.' See Matt. ix. 1-8.

32 ¶ But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father. 33 Take ye heed, watch and pray: for ye know not when the time is.

'Neither the Son.' This passage has no more difficulty than that in Luke ii. 52, where it is said that Jesus increased in wisdom and stature. He had a human nature. He grew as a man in knowledge. As a man, his knowledge must be finite. As a man, he often spoke, reasoned, inquired, felt, feared, read, learned, ate, drank, and walked. All these imply that he was a man; and that, as a man, he was not infinite.

34 *For the Son of man is as a man taking a far journey, who left his house, and gave authority to his servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the porter to watch.*

'Who left his house.' The word 'house' often means family. Our Saviour here represents himself as going away, leaving his household, the church, assigning to the apostles, and all his servants, their duty, and leaving it uncertain when he would return. As his return was a matter of most consequence, and as the affairs of his kingdom were intrusted to them, just as the affairs of a house to servants, when the master was absent: so it was of vast importance that they should be faithful at their post: defend the house from danger, and be ready for his return. 'The porter.' The door-keeper. To the door-keeper was intrusted, particularly, the faithful care of the house, whose duty it was to attend carefully on those who came, and those who left the house.

35 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cock-crowing, or in the morning:

'Watch ye.' Be diligent, faithful, and waiting for the return of your Lord who will come at an unexpected hour, 'Master of the house.' Denoting here the Lord Jesus. 'At even or at midnight, or,' &c. This refers to the four divisions into which the Jews divided the night.

36 Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping.

'Find you sleeping.' Inattentive to your post, neglecting your duty, and unprepared for his coming.

37 And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

'All, Watch.' This command was proper, not only for those who were expecting the calamities that were soon to come upon the Jews, but for all. The Son of man may come at any moment, and we should, therefore, be ready. If we are his friends, if we have been renewed and pardoned, if we have repented of our sins, and believed on him, and are leading a holy life—we are ready. If not, we are unprepared, and soon, probably while we are not expecting it, the cold hand of death will be laid on us, and we shall be hurried to the place where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth. O how important it is to be ready, and to escape the awful sufferings of an eternal hell!

## CHAPTER XIV.

1 AFTER two days was *the feast of the passover*, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and

put *him* to death. 2 But they said, Not on the feast-day, lest there be an uproar of the people.

See this passage explained in notes on Matt. xxvi. 1—16. 'And of unleavened bread.' So called because at that feast no other bread was used but that which had been made without leaven or yeast. 'By craft.' By subtilty (Matt.), that is, by some secret plan that would secure possession of him without exciting the opposition of the people.

3 ¶ And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster-box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on his head. 4 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? 5 For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. 6 And Jesus said, Let her alone: why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me. 7 For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always. 8 She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. 9 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her. 10 ¶ And Judas Iscariot, one of the twelve, went unto the chief priests, to betray him unto them. 11 And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

'Ointment.' This was a perfume: it was used only to give a pleasant odour: it was liquid. 'Of spikenard.' The nard from which this perfume was made, is a plant of the East Indies, with a small slender stalk, and a heavy, thick root. The best perfume is obtained from the root. 'And she brake the box.' This may mean no more than that she broke the seal of the box, so that it could be poured out. Boxes of perfumes are often sealed, or made fast with wax, to prevent the perfume from escaping. 'Three hundred pence.' About nine pounds, thirteen shillings. '*She hath done what she could.*' She hath showed the highest attachment in her power; and it was a sufficient argument against



there being any real waste, that it was done for the honour of Christ.

12 ¶ And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the passover, his disciples said unto him, Where wilt thou that we go and prepare that thou mayest eat the passover? 13 And he sendeth forth two of his disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. 14 And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the good man of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples? 15 And he will show you a large upper-room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us. 16 And his disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as he had said unto them: and they made ready the passover.

See Matt. xxvi. 17—19. 'They killed the passover.' The paschal lamb, which was slain in keeping the passover. 'Go and prepare.' Go and prepare a lamb; have it roasted, and properly prepared with the usual things to eat with it. 'The city.' The city of Jerusalem. They were now in Bethany, about two miles from the city. 'A man bearing a pitcher of water.' Such a thing could not have been conjectured. If Jesus knew a circumstance like that, then he, in the same way, must have known all things. Then he sees all the actions of man: hears every word, and marks every thought. Then the righteous are under his care, and the wicked, much as they may wish to be unseen, cannot escape the notice of his eye. 'The good man of the house.' This signifies simply the master of the house. 'The guest chamber.' A chamber for guests or friends—an unoccupied room. 'A large upper room.' The word used here denotes the upper room devoted to purposes of prayer, repose, and often of eating. See note, Matt. ix. 1—8. 'Furnished and prepared.' Literally, spread and ready. Spread with a carpet, or with couches, such as were used in eating. See note, Matt. xxiii. 6.

17 And in the evening he cometh with the twelve. 18 And as they sat and did eat, Jesus said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with me shall betray me. 19 And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto him one by one, *Is it I?* and another said, *Is it I?* 20 And he answered and said unto them, *It is one of the twelve, that dippeth with me in the dish.* 21 The Son of man indeed goeth, as it is written

of him: but wo to that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born. 22 ¶ And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat: this is my body. 23 And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. 24 And he said unto them, This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many. 25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God. 26 ¶ And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the mount of Olives. 27 And Jesus saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. 28 But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. 29 But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will* not I. 30 And Jesus saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. 31 But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

See the passage explained in Matt. xxvi. 20—35.

‘More vehemently.’ More earnestly, more confidently.

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray. 33 And he taketh with him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; 34 And saith unto them, My soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch. 35 And he went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from him. 36 And he said, Abba, Father, all things *are* possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.

See notes on Matt. xxvi. 36—46. ‘Abba.’ This word denotes ‘father.’ It is a Syriac word, and is used by our Saviour as a word denoting filial affection and tenderness. See Rom. viii. 15.

37 And he cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldest not thou watch one hour? 38 Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak. 39 And again he went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. 40 And when he returned, he found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer him.

'Neither wist they,' &c. Neither knew they. They were so conscious of the impropriety of sleeping at that time, that they could not find any answer to give to the inquiry why they had done it.

41 And he cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. 42 Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth me is at hand.

'It is enough.' Campbell translates it, 'all is over,' that is, the time when you could have been of service to me is gone by. The time was past, and he was already, as it were, in the hands of his enemies.

43 ¶ And immediately while he yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief priests and the scribes and the elders.

See Matt. xxvi. 47—56.

44 And he that betrayed him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is he; take him, and lead *him* away safely. 45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed him.

'Master, master.' As if expressing great joy that he had found him again.

46 ¶ And they laid their hands on him, and took him. 47 And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear, 48 And Jesus answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take me? 49 I was daily with you in the temple teaching, and ye took me not: but the scriptures

must be fulfilled. 50 And they all forsook him, and fled. 51 And there followed him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked body; and the young men laid hold on him: 52 And he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

'A certain young man.' Who this was, we have no means of determining. It may have been recorded to show that the conspirators had instructions to take the apostles, as well as Jesus; and supposing him to be one of them, they laid hold of him to take him before the high-priest. 'A linen cloth cast about his naked body.' He was roused from sleep, and probably threw around him what was most convenient. 'The young men.' The Roman soldiers. They were called young men because they were made up chiefly of youth originally. This was a Jewish mode of speaking. See Gen. xiv. 24. 2 Sam. ii. 14. Isa. xiii. 18.

53 ¶ And they led Jesus away to the high priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes. 54 And Peter followed him afar off, even into the palace of the high priest: and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire. 55 And the chief priests and all the council sought for witness against Jesus to put him to death; and found none. 56 For many bare false witness against him, but their witness agreed not together. 57 And there arose certain, and bare false witness against him, saying, 58 We heard him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. 59 But neither so did their witness agree together. 60 And the high priest stood up in the midst, and asked Jesus, saying, Answerest thou nothing? what *is it* which these witness against thee? 61 But he held his peace, and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him, and said unto him, Art thou the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? 62 And Jesus said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven. 63 Then the high priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? 64 Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned him to be guilty of death. 65 And



some began to spit on him, and to cover his face, and to buffet him, and to say unto him, Prophecy : and the servants did strike him with the palms of their hands. 66 ¶ And as Peter was beneath in the palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high priest : 67 And when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with Jesus of Nazareth. 68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch ; and the cock crew. 69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by, This is *one* of them. 70 And he denied it again. And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them : for thou art a Galilean, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*. 71 But he began to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not this man of whom ye speak. 72 And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that Jesus said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

See this fully explained in notes on Matt. xxvi. 57—75.

## CHAPTER XV.

1 AND straightway in the morning the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council, and bound Jesus, and carried *him* away, and delivered *him* to Pilate. 2 And Pilate asked him, Art thou the King of the Jews ? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*. 3 And the chief priests accused him of many things : but he answered nothing. 4 And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing ? behold how many things they witness against thee. 5 But Jesus yet answered nothing ; so that Pilate marvelled. 6 Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. 7 And there was *one*, named Barabbas, *which* lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. 8 And the multitude crying aloud began to desire

*him to do as he ever done unto them.* 9 But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? 10 For he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. 11 But the chief priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. 12 And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto him* whom ye call the King of the Jews? 13 And they cried out again, Crucify him. 14 Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath he done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify him. 15 ¶ And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus, when he had scourged *him*, to be crucified. 16 And the soldiers led him away into the hall, called Pretorium; and they call together the whole band.

See the principal events in this chapter explained in notes on Matt. xxvii.

'Called Prætorium.' The hall of the prætor, or Roman governor, where he sat to administer justice. 'Whole band.' The tenth part of a legion; it consisted commonly of about four hundred and twenty soldiers.

17 And they clothed him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about his *head*, 18 And began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews!

'With purple.' Matthew says scarlet. See note on Matt. xxvii. 28. 'About his head.' In the form of a garland or diadem. The whole head was not covered, but it was placed in a circle round the temples.

19 And they smote him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped him. 20 And when they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him, and put his own clothes on him, and led him out to crucify him. 21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear his cross. 22 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull.

'Worshipped him' Mocked him with the appearance of wor-

mage. The word 'worship' here denotes the respect and honour shown to princes and kings.

23 And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but he received *it* not. 24 And when they had crucified him, they parted his garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. 25 And it was the third hour, and they crucified him.

'Wine mingled,' &c. Matthew says vinegar. It was probably wine soured, so that it might be called either. This was the common drink of the Roman soldiers. 'Myrrh.' Myrrh was a balsamic substance, procured from Arabia, used in embalming, and distinguished by its bitterness. Hence its name. Matthew says it was gall, probably meaning a bitter substance only, without denoting what it was. This was a stupifying mixture commonly given to those who were crucified, to blunt the pains of a lingering death. See Prov. xxxi. 6.

26 And the superscription of his accusation was written over, **THE KING OF THE JEWS.** 27 And with him they crucify two thieves; the one on his right hand, and the other on his left. 28 And the scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And he was numbered with the transgressors. 29 ¶ And they that passed by rallied on him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest *it* in three days, 30 Save thyself, and come down from the cross. 31 Likewise also the chief priests mocking said among themselves with the scribes, He saved others; himself he cannot save. 32 Let Christ the King of Israel descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe. And they that were crucified with him reviled him. 33 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. 34 And at the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? 35 And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, he calleth Elias. 36 And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take him down. 37 And Jesus

cried with a loud voice, and gave up the ghost. 38 And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom. 39 ¶ And when the centurion, which stood over against him, saw that he so cried out, and gave up the ghost, he said, Truly this man was the Son of God. 40 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; 41 (Who also, when he was in Galilee, followed him, and ministered unto him;) and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem.

'The superscription.' The writing over his head on the cross. 'The king of the Jews.' See notes on Matt. xxvii. 37. 'And the scripture was fulfilled,' &c. This passage of scripture is found in Isaiah liii. 12. This does not mean that he was a transgressor, but simply, that in dying, he had a place with transgressors. Jesus died, the just for the unjust, and in his death, as well as in his life, he was holy, harmless, undefiled.

42 ¶ And now when the even was come, because it was the preparation, that is, the day before the sabbath,

'The even.' The time after three o'clock in the afternoon. 'The preparation,' &c. The following day was to be a day of peculiar solemnity, called the great day of the feast. More than ordinary preparation was, therefore, made for that sabbath on the day before. Hence the day was known as a day of preparation. This preparation consisted in getting ready food, &c., to be used on the sabbath.

43 Joseph of Arimathea, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus.

'Joseph, an honourable counsellor.' A distinguished man who probably held a high office among the Jews, as one of their great council or a Jewish senator. The word 'honourable' is given in reference to his personal character, as being a man of integrity, and blameless life. 'Waited for the kingdom of God.' Waited for, or expected, the coming of the Messiah. It implies that he believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and that he had waited for him to build up the kingdom of God; and this agrees with what John says, xix. 38, that he was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews. He had retained his secret belief in the hope that Jesus would be treated as the Messiah, and then he proposed



openly to acknowledge his attachment to him. But God called him to a public profession of attachment in a different manner, and gave this distinguished man grace to evince it. So men often delay a profession of attachment to Christ. They cherish a secret love, they indulge a hope in the mercy of God; but they conceal it for fear of man. Whereas God requires that the attachment should be made known. As soon as they have evidence, satisfactory to their own minds, that they are christians, so soon are they bound to profess Christ before men. This is the command of God, and this is the way of peace. None have the prospect of comfort in religion, who do not have respect to all the commandments of God. 'Went in boldly unto Pilate.' The disciples of Jesus had fled, and if they had not, they had no influence with Pilate. Unless there had been a special application to Pilate, in behalf of Jesus, his body would have been buried that night in the common grave with the malefactors: for it was a law of the Jews that the body of an executed man should not remain on the cross on the sabbath. At this critical juncture, God inspired Joseph with confidence; he dared to express sympathy for the Saviour; he went in boldly, and begged the body of Jesus. It needed no small measure of courage to do this. Jesus had just been condemned, mocked, spit upon, crucified. To avow attachment for him now was proof of sincere affection; and the Holy Spirit has thought this worthy of special notice. 'Craved the body.' Begged or asked.

44 And Pilate marvelled if he were already dead: and calling *unto him* the centurion, he asked him whether he had been any while dead.

'And Pilate marvelled if.' Wondered if he was dead; or wondered that he was so soon dead. It was not common for persons crucified to expire under two or three days, sometimes not until the sixth or seventh.

45 And when he knew *it* of the centurion, he gave the body to Joseph.

'When he knew it of the centurion.' Being informed by the centurion of the fact that he was dead.

46 And he bought fine linen, and took him down, and wrapped him in the linen, and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre. 47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary *the mother* of Joses beheld where he was laid.

'Beheld where he was laid.' The affection of these pious females never forsook them in all the trials, contempt, and sufferings of their Lord. They followed him to the cross; they watched him, as near to him as they were permitted to come, in his last

moments; they followed him when taken down, and laid in the tomb. This is the nature of true love. While professed attachment will abound in prosperity, and live most in sunshine, it is only genuine love that will go into the dark shades of adversity, and flourish there. In scenes of poverty, want, affliction, and death, it shows its reality. That which lives there, is genuine. That which turns away from such scenes, is spurious.

#### CHAPTER XVI.

1 AND when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the *mother* of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him. 2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

See this passage explained in notes on Matt. xxviii. 1—8. 'Sweet spices,' Aromatics. Substances used in embalming. Many of the substances used for embalming were bitter; and none of them, perhaps, could properly be called sweet. The word 'spices' expresses all that there is in the original. 'Anoint him.' Embalm him. Or apply these spices to his body to keep it from putrefaction. This is proof that they did not suppose he would rise again. And the fact that they did not expect he would rise gives more strength to the evidence for his resurrection.

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? 4 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great.

'It was very great.' These words belong to the third verse: 'Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?' for, the evangelist adds, it was very great. 'Sitting on the right side.' As they entered. The sepulchre was large enough to admit persons to go into it; not unlike, in that respect, our vaults.

5 And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment; and they were affrighted. 6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: he is risen; he is not here: behold the place where they laid him. 7 But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. 8 And they went out quickly, and fled from

the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any *man*; for they were afraid.

‘And Peter.’ It is remarkable that Peter is singled out for special notice. It would have been right if the Lord Jesus had from that moment cast him off, and noticed him no more. But he loved him still. Having loved him once, he loved him unto the end, John xiii. 1. As a proof that he forgave him, and still loved him, he sent him this special message: the assurance that though he had denied him, and had done much to aggravate his sufferings, yet he had risen, and was still his Lord and Redeemer. The meaning is, ‘tell his disciples, and especially Peter:’ sending to him a particular message. Before his fall, Jesus had prayed for him that his faith should not fail, Luke xxii. 32; and the prayer of Jesus was always heard, John xi. 42.

9 ¶ Now, when *Jesus* was risen early the first *day* of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. 10 *And* she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. 11 *And* they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

‘Believed not.’ This is proof that they did not expect his resurrection; that they were not easily deceived; and that nothing but the clearest evidence could convince them.

12 ¶ After that he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked, and went into the country.

‘He appeared in another form.’ In a form unlike his ordinary appearance, so much so that they did not at first know him. See notes on Luke xxiv. 13–31. ‘As they walked and went into the country.’ To Emmaus. Luke xxiv. 13.

13 *And* they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

‘The residue.’ The other disciples. Those who remained at Jerusalem.

14 ¶ Afterward he appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

‘As they sat at meat.’ As they were reclining at their meal. ‘And upbraided them,’ &c. Rebuked them, or reproached them. *This was done because, after all the evidence they had had of his*

resurrection, still they did not believe. This is a most important circumstance in the history of our Lord's resurrection. Never were men more difficult to be convinced of any thing, than they were of that fact. And this shows, conclusively, that they had not conspired to impose on the world. They were not convinced, until it was impossible for them longer to deny it. Had they expected it, they would have caught easily at the evidence, and even turned every circumstance in favour of such an event.

15 And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.

'Into all the world.' To the Gentiles as well as the Jews. This was contrary to the opinions of the Jews, that the Gentiles should be admitted to the privileges of the Messiah's kingdom, or that the partition wall between them should be broken down. See Acts xxii. 21; xxviii. 28. It was long before the disciples could be trained to the belief that the gospel was to be preached to all men; and it was only by special revelation, even after this command, that Peter preached to the Gentile centurion, Acts x. 'Preach. Proclaim; make known; offer. To do this to every creature, is to offer pardon and eternal life to him on the terms of the plan of mercy: through repentance and faith in the Lord Jesus. 'The gospel.' The good news. The tidings of salvation. The assurance that the Messiah is come, and that sin may be forgiven, and the soul saved. 'To every creature.' To the whole creation. That is, to every human being. Man has no right to limit this offer to any men or class of men. God commands his servants to offer this salvation to all men. If they reject it, it is at their peril.

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.

'He that believeth.' That is, believeth the gospel. Credits it to be true, and acts as if it were true. This is the whole of faith. Man is a sinner. He should act on the belief of this, and repent. There is a God. Man should believe it, and fear and love him, and seek his favour. The Lord Jesus died to save him. To have faith in him, is to believe that this is true, and to act accordingly: that is, to trust him, to rely on him, to love him, to feel that we have no merit, and to cast our all upon him. There is a heaven and a hell. To believe this, is to credit the account, and act as if it were true: to seek the one, and avoid the other. We are to die. To believe this, is to act as if this were so: to be in readiness for it, and to expect it daily and hourly. To do this, is to be a christian; not to do it, is to be an infidel. 'Is baptized.' Is initiated into the church by the application of water, as significant that he is a sinner, and needs the purifying influences of the Holy Ghost. Faith and baptism are the beginnings of a christ-



tian life: the one the beginning of piety in the soul, the other of its manifestation before men, or of a profession of religion. No man can tell how much he endangers his eternal interest by being ashamed of Christ before men. See Mark viii. 38. 'Shall be saved.' Saved from sin, Matt. i. 21, and from eternal death, John v. 24; iii. 36, and raised to eternal life in heaven, John v. 28; xvii. 2, 24. 'Shall be damned.' Shall be condemned. That is, condemned by God, and cast off from his presence, 2 Thess. i. 6—9. They will be adjudged to be guilty by God in the day of judgment, Rom. ii. 12, 16. Matt. xxv. 41; they will deserve to die for ever, Rom. ii. 6, 8; and they will be cast out into a place of woe to all eternity, Matt. xxv. 46.—God has a right to appoint his own terms of mercy. Man has no claim on him for heaven. The sinner rejects the terms of salvation knowingly, deliberately, and perseveringly. He shows by this that he has no love for God, and his law. He rejects God, and he must go into eternity without a Father and without a God. He has no source of comfort in himself, and must die for ever. There is no other being but God that can make man happy in eternity; and without his favour, the sinner must be wretched.

17 And these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues;

'And these signs.' These miracles. These evidences that they are sent from God. 'Them that believe.' The apostles and those in the primitive age who were endowed with like power. 'In my name.' By my authority, and using the power that I would in such cases, if bodily present. He did it in his own name. He did it as possessing original, underived authority. See the account of his stilling the sea, Matt. viii. 26, &c.; of his healing the sick, Matt. ix. 5, 6; of his raising Lazarus, John xi. The prophets spoke in the name of the Lord. The apostles did likewise, Acts iii. 6, &c. There was, therefore, an important difference between Jesus and all the other messengers that God has sent into the world. He acted in his own name; they in the name of another. He wielded his own power; they were the instrument by which God put forth the omnipotence of his arm to save. He was, therefore, God; they were men, of like passions as other men, Acts xiv. 15. 'Shall they cast out devils.' See note on Matt. iv. 24. Compare Acts xvi. 16—18. 'Shall speak with new tongues.' Shall speak other languages than their native language. This was remarkably fulfilled on the day of Pentecost, Acts ii. 4—11. It existed also in other places. See 1 Cor. xii. 10.

18 They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

'They shall take up serpents.' This was literally fulfilled when Paul shook the viper from his hand. See Acts xxviii. 5, 6. 'Any deadly thing.' Any poison, causing death. 'Shall not hurt them.' There is a similar promise in Isa. xliii. 2. 'They shall lay hands on the sick,' &c. See instances of this in the Acts of the Apostles, ch. iii. 6, 7; v. 15, &c.

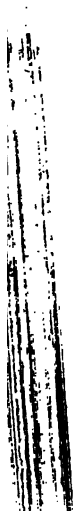
19 ¶ So then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God.

'He was received up into heaven.' In a cloud from the mount of Olives. See Acts i. 9. 'The right hand of God.' This phrase is taken from the manner of speaking among men, and means that he was exalted to honour and power in the heavens. It was esteemed the place of the highest honour to be seated at the right hand of a prince. So, to be seated at the right hand of God, means that Jesus is exalted to the highest honour of the universe. Compare Eph. i. 20—22.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the Lord working with *them*, and confirming the word with signs following. Amen.

'They went forth.' The apostles. 'Every where.' In all parts of the world. See the account in the Acts and the Epistles. 'The Lord working with them.' By miracles, by removing obstacles, by supporting them, and by giving the gospel success, and making it effectual to saving men. 'Confirming the word.' Showing it to be the word of God, or a revelation from heaven. 'By signs following.' By attending miracles. By raising the dead, healing the sick, &c., as signs that God was with them, and had sent them forth to preach. 'Amen,' Truly, verily, so be it.







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